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Adventure

MAGAZINE

Registered U. S. Patent Office

SEPTEMBER, 1952

CONTENTS

Vol. 126, No. 2

FIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN ..... Verne Athanas 12
Hotter than that blazing mountain was the hate that was gutting its mightiest son. . . .

KILLER SHIP ..... John Rhodes Sturdy 26
A lifeless ship . . . a crewless skipper—and a red tide rendezvous. . . .

GUN SAVAGE ..... Bennett Foster 34
His gun held the riddle of his yesterdays. . . .

POINT OF HONOR (Verse) ..... Harold Willard Gleason 43
"At break of dawn, we principals shall meet. . . ."

DEVIL AND THE SPIT KIT ..... Dan Gallery 44
The deathless saga of the ping-happy spit kit whose sub-chasing knew no hits, no runs—and no terrors!

RACE TO THE SUN (Fact) ..... Roland Wild 53
Even death does not cancel the final battle between the top drivers of Europe.

FAMOUS MILITARY CORPS (Fact) ..... Howard R. Voight 57
The Green Brigade.

THREE MINUTES TO HELL ..... J. B. Weiss 58
The sergeant couldn't remember what he had lost—other than life itself. . . .

SEA WINNER ..... Fred Lane 64
He wasn't afraid, Stormy wasn't—not of storms, life, love, or death. . . .

COLD TRAIL ..... Chick Manwaring 72
With hate between them, they bet their lives—that the other was a better man!

LOST DORY ..... Edmund Gilligan 78
A deathless novelette of one man against the Atlantic.

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THE CAMP-FIRE ..... Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 6

ASK ADVENTURE ..... Information you can't get elsewhere 97

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS ..... The men who furnish it 106

LOST TRAILS ..... Where old paths cross 114

Cover painted for Adventure by Norman Saunders
Ejler G. Jakobsson, Editor

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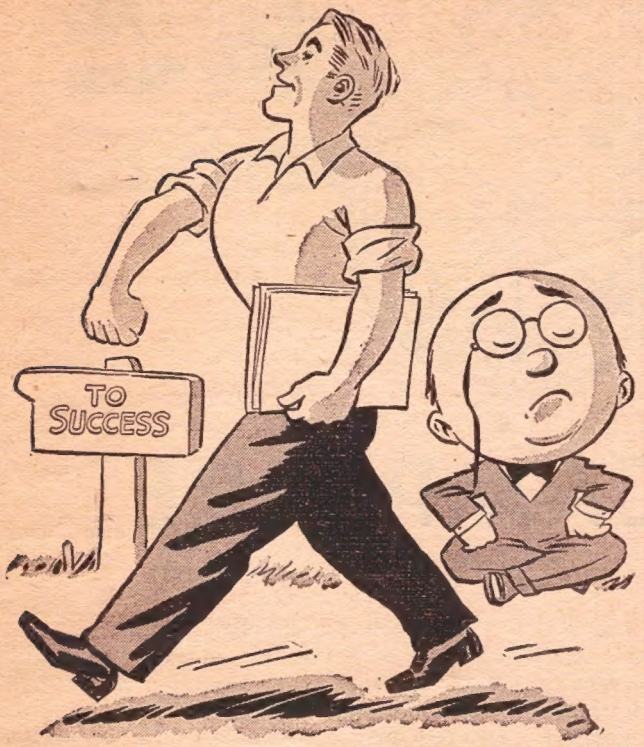
Published bi-monthly by Popular Publications, Inc., at 1125 E. Valle Ave., Kokomo, Indiana. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President. John J. McVarish, Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Kokomo, Indiana. Copyright, 1952, by Popular Publications, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Title registered in U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Single copy 25 cents. Annual subscription for U. S. A., its possessions and Canada, $1.25; other countries, 50c additional. All correspondence relating to this publication should be addressed to 1125 E. Valle Ave., Kokomo, Indiana, or 205 E. 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Printed in the U.S.A.

How to pass a genius



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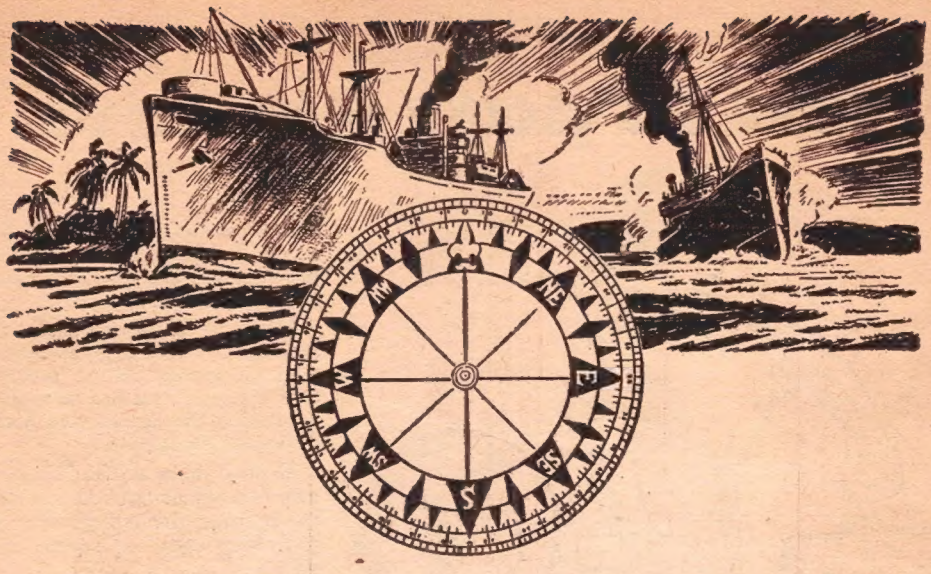

THE CAMP-FIRE

REAR ADM. DANIEL V. GALLERY —whose "first for *Adventure*," *Devil and the Spit Kit,* will delight all discerning readers of this issue—piped himself aboard the space traveler we know as the Earth in Chicago some years ago—and has pioneered methods of taking off from it ever since.

Arriving originally without rank or insignia, he acquired both via Annapolis, graduating well in the top tenth of his class. In 1926 he started flying, after having served on battleships, cruisers and destroyers, and has since flown more than 6,500 hours. He has specialized in aviation ordnance, invented several improvements in aircraft machinegun sights and was closely associated for five years with the development of the Norden Bomb Sight. He received his commission as a rear admiral in 1945.

Since World War II Rear Admiral Gallery has been Assistant Chief of Naval Operations of Guided Missiles (1947 to 1949), Deputy Commander, Operational Development Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet (1950), Commander Fleet Quonset (September 1950 to April 1951), Commander Carrier Division Six, now stationed in the Mediterranean.

The author's principal hobby is baseball and he has been a fan since boyhood when he sold score cards for the White Sox in Chicago. He says, "I still play soft ball regularly and hold down the old poop's traditional spot at the hot corner."

We are, of course, delighted to welcome Dan Gallery to the Brigade—and hope we may see many more by him on these pages.

SPACE limitations prevented our running our customary introductory piece on John Rhodes Sturdy, when he made his first appearance in the memorable March issue. We are both pleased and proud to bring him back with *Killer Ship,* a truly unforgettable tale of the sea—and of the men who have won her.

Mr. Sturdy is Montreal-born and was educated in Canada. He entered newspaper work with the *Montreal Gazette* and worked as a feature writer and columnist. He joined the *Chicago Tribune* staff, and served with that paper in London, England, during the blitz of 1940. At the end of that year he joined the Royal Canadian Navy, and served at sea in corvettes, cruisers and destroyers until the end of the war, in the

(Continued on page 8)

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(Continued from page 6)

North Atlantic, the Channel, and off the Norwegian coast.

For a time after the war he was public relations officer for the Canadian Pacific Railway. He lives currently in Vancouver, B. C., and has written both magazine fiction and motion picture screen plays for Hollywood studios.

He is married, has one son, and wears the rank of lieutenant-commander, R.C.N., retired.

HAVING never been able to understand why people become writers when having a million dollars would seem to be so much more profitable, we put our usual question to Fred Lane, whose *Sea Winner* you will see elsewhere in this issue. His reply confirms a long-standing suspicion—writers (and editors) belong to a breed who insist on a round trip between the frying pan and the fire.

Without being fully aware of it, I started my writing career when I was eighteen. I was working out with a chipping hammer on the sizzling boat deck of a freighter in the Sulu Seas, bound for Zamboanga, when I happened to glance into the radio shack. Sparks had his feet on the desk, the fan going, and was reading a magazine. Pausing to observe this enviable character brought on the bosun's wrath, a few additions to my vocabulary, and the ambition to become a "brass pounder." Study when off watch on the long runs to the Orient, and the help of a radio operator or two, enabled me to get my ticket. Then I set about my business of seeing the world—the old Oceanic to Australia and the South Seas, U.S. Lines out of New York to Europe. Liking variety and being curious, I served on oil-barges, lumber schooners, tugboats, freighters, and luxury liners.

I went into shoreside high-speed telegraphy, then found myself in broadcast engineering. With no visible signs of reluctance, I discarded my screwdrivers and pliers and started working with words as a writer-producer for radio. Encouraged by an old hand in the fiction game—Dick Wetjen—I forsook the soapmakers and cereal boys of the airwaves.

During the war, I went back to radio in a teaching capacity, training radio men for the Signal Corps and merchant marine at Central Trade School in Oakland, California; and to OWI as a writer of overseas propaganda.

Now living on 14 shoreside acres at Moss Beach, Calif., watching the ships go by between yarns. But, if I get a gleam in my eye when I see a tramp hull down on the horizon, there's always my lovely wife to inquire as to how I can write by looking out the window. But I can dream, can't I?

NOW and then we're privileged to become a new writer's first publisher anywhere.

J. B. Weiss, as far as the world knows, has written only one story, *Three Minutes to Hell,* in this issue. We feel it's an exceptionally well done piece, and one that augurs well for Mr. Weiss's future as a man's fictioneer.

Of himself, Mr. Weiss says:

I am 27 years old and reside in New Jersey with my wife and little girl age three. I served for two and one-half years in the glider and parachute infantries with the eleventh airborne division during World War II. I picked up my discharge via the shrapnel route in the battle for Manila in February 1945. I have been engaged in sporadic writing for about one year, and the publication of *Three Minutes to Hell* represents my first success in this field.

FROM Reader Eric V. Lucy, New Orleans, a few interesting personal addenda to Carl Lane's speculation on the origins of the word "yacht" in the March issue—

In your March issue on page 76 I quote: "The word "yacht" is derived from the Dutch, *"jagen"*—the hunt. What the trim vessels we know as yachts hunt, we cannot say. Possibly pleasure, speed, escape—what do yachtsmen hunt? Certainly not pirates and smugglers, which the swift early Dutch boats, the Jagers, did."

Possibly I can clear up what yachts did hunt in World War I—I served as Lieut. U.S.N.R. aboard the *U.S.S. May* a converted yacht, 275 ft. long, mounting one 4 inch 50 cal. on the bow, two 3-inch 50 cal. on the stern, and one Y gun for depth charges 500 pounds, racks carrying twenty-four, 500 pound depth charges. There were also twenty-five depth charges lashed to the rails, and carried on stern fantail.

During the early part of November, 1917, the 5th Squadron sailed from Newport, R.I. for France—five yachts in all, towing ten French 110 ft. submarine chasers. After a hectic trip across the Atlantic via Bermuda, Azores and Portugal we made port—We had to run South to Portugal to escape one of the worst storms in the Bay of Biscay.

The squadron was commanded by Admiral Newton A. McCully, and was based at Royan, France, the entrance to the Gironde River.

(Continued on page 10)

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(Continued from page 8)

During the year spent in European waters we convoyed many troop and merchant ships into various French and English ports. We discouraged several submarines from attacking the convoys, gave pursuit, and the *U.S.S. Christobel* sank a German sub off the entrance to Brest, France.

During Aug. 1918 the *U.S.S. May* and *U.S.S. Noma* salvaged the merchant ship *Westward Ho*, torpedoed in the bow and down by the head; we towed this ship stern first into Brest, France, a distance of 315 miles, and received a letter of commendation from Admiral Wilson, commanding European forces in France.

This I believe will show we hunted submarines.

I have been reading *Adventure* for so many years I can't remember when I started, a swell magazine. Am now 60 years old.

SPACE limitations forbid our keeping any but file copies of *Adventure* on hand, except for recent issues—however, we like to help readers anxious for back numbers. Mr. Joseph A. Wilson, of Ashland, Massachusetts, writes:

I am wondering if it would be possible to obtain the following copies of *Adventure Magazine*—the two June issues 1920, two July issues 1920, and the first August issue 1920.

Anyone owning—and willing to dispose of—the copies Mr. Wilson wants, may communicate with him at P.O. Box 142, Ashland, Mass.

READER A. BOWES, 149 Lamb Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, asks:

Are there any readers in South America, from Mexico to Cape Horn, willing to correspond with a Canadian?

REACTIVATION of the Identification Service continues—we are not yet issuing new I.D. cards, but are getting an undiminishing boost out of letters such as the following, from *Adventurer* Claude M. Hall, of Bend, Oregon:

It is certainly welcome news that you are reactivating *Adventure* cards. It's been so long ago that I've lost all track of the issue date of my card—around '13 or '14, I think, and it has been with me in many places neither of us will ever see again. It will be like parting with an old friend, but I'm sending it in.

WE ARE happy to be able to print more comments from readers regarding the March *Camp-fire*, and trust that at least some of you old-timers will find this and subsequent issues of *Adventure* bringing you the kind of fact and fiction your helpful suggestions merit.

Here's one from A. J. Dornish, St. Mary's Penna.—and in this connection may we call Mr. Dornish's attention to the Dan Gallery story in this issue?

Mr. Dornish's letter follows:

I suppose I could call myself one of the old-timers. The first time I bought an Adventure was sometime before 1920, probably about '16 or '17. I've bought it more or less regularly ever since. I have a house full of boys, five of them, and the mag was always fit for all of us to read so I kept on buying it.

I've missed stories with a comical slant. The old Dirty Shirt cowboy stories were among them. And why don't you hunt up an author that could give us animal stories like F. St. Mars used to write.

Straight adventure doesn't need the snapper at the end, or a physcho twist. Give us historical tales, big game hunts, Army stories, old and new—ditto for the navy. And don't pass up a science fiction story if the thing fits the mag. And don't forget the hair pants stories—look what a play the cowboys are getting now. Stories about weapons and their development are okay, as are sports and contests, if they have an adventure slant. Otherwise let the sporting mags have them. I am a Post Office Superintendent, fifty-one, married, and have sold a couple of stories in the science fiction field. I like guns, was an instructor at Camp Perry in the twenties, shot on an International Rifle Team and a lot of state and regional teams. Ran a school for rifle instruction during the war and taught the young fellows who taught others. I amuse myself with shooting and amateur gunsmithing, oil painting, skiing and chess. Also I like history, especially European history before the thirteenth century.

Hope *Adventure* gets better and bigger with every issue.

A WELCOME pat on the back from T. M. Salisbury, New York City:

Thank you for the May issue of *Adventure* containing stories by many favorite writers.

MacCreagh's *Blood for the Hawk* was a most welcome treat. I have not enjoyed reading any of his work since before the war but remember him as a masterful spinner of yarns of big game hunting in

(Continued on page 112)

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FIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Hotter than that blazing mountain was the hate that was gutting its mightiest son. . . .

HE MADE his routine call into Camp Nine, cranking out the long and two shorts on the battery phone and pitching his voice rather loud to carry over the steady humming and twittering of the bare-wire line.

". . .no, nothing smoking. Couple windfalls on the Section Thirty-three road. They catch that one over on Buck?"

The timekeeper on the other end of the wire told him tinnily that they had got onto the strike-fire beyond Buck Mountain, and then waited for him to say something else, so Chan said, "Okay," and hung up.

Out of long habit, he sent his eyes high, skimming the high, timbered shoulders that outlined his domain, stepping out of the shade of the porch where the phone box was, to walk deliberately around the shack to the water-bag hung in the shade. Even when he took his drink, his eyes were out over the far slopes, squinted against the

A Novelette

By
VERNE
ATHANAS

hazy glare of summer heat that made the distant timber waver and dance with an unreal shimmer. With motions as spare and precise as those of an operating surgeon, he corked the bag, drove the cork home with the heel of his hand, and hooked the rope handle back on its nail.

He wondered sometimes why he let it drag out like this. Why, uniformly and inevitably, he hung up the receiver and had to take a drink to ease the dryness that came into his throat every time he called. He couldn't bluff himself, maybe. It was easy enough to be tough before an audience; and Chan Dragoon had that rep—he took nothing from nobody—but a man couldn't bluff himself, not when he had to take a drink to ease his throat after talking to a bland box of wires and batteries.

He had his one little edge on them, though, the grimly humorous thought, *I've got the years on 'em, anyway,* but even that didn't help much. Because tomorrow he'd have to ring the long and two shorts again, and that could be the day they'd pick to tell him—and then how tough can a man be within himself?

Hell with that, he thought, and went up his lookout tree, pacing himself so that he did not have to stop to breathe before he was on the platform, the one small sop to his vanity that he permitted himself, even

. . . pointing at the flaming sky like the accusing finger of an angry god. . . .

though there was no one around to know whether he had to pause or not during the climb. Or maybe that was why it was so important that he make it without a stop. He hated to lie to himself.

He could have kept his mouth shut, of course. He hadn't had to open his yap and put in his two cents worth at the fire meeting. But it got pretty smelly, watching Al Bestraine, who should have been carrying the meeting, sitting back and waiting while the brains hashed it out in the pompous language a man seemed to take on when he moved up into the brains category. There seemed to be something about putting on a clean shirt and a necktie that changed a man; maybe the necktie turned into a collar, a choke collar with the leash in somebody else's hands....

Chan snorted silently and sardonically at his own maundering foolishness and confirmed mentally that the smoke yonder was really moving and of course would be the mill train, and— *What the hell, you've had the can tied to your tail before, bucko; you were looking for a job when you came here.*

And that was eighteen years ago, too, bucko, he reminded himself; when a man walked into a job and he could cut her or he couldn't, and he didn't have his name down on the books with a number that told how old he was and where he'd worked before and the "deducts" didn't skim the cream that a man could be ground-squirreling for a bad time coming. And the timekeeper kept the books and tended to his own business, instead of being the manager's nephew who was really going places in the company— *And is that smoke or just a sun shimmer over the ridge?*

HUMIDITY was way down, had been for a week, and last night's dry storm had done nothing but stab its lightning into the tinderbox that was McCarran Logging. Chan closed his eyes and counted ten while the hot breeze eddied about his scantling platform, midway up the tall ponderosa pine. He made himself hold it the full long count, and the thin wavering above the ridge was still there. He jackknifed over the platform edge and felt for the first step of the ladder with his foot.

He cranked out the long and two shorts on the phone, heard it twitter and chirp at him, and then Arthur Ellison in the timekeeper's shack said faintly, "Camp Nine."

"Chan Dragoon. Cut in on the fire line and get me Buck lookout, will you?"

Arthur Ellison's voice picked up a notch. "Got a smoke, Dragoon?"

"I'd like to find out. Get me Buck, will you?"

Arthur's voice became very businesslike. "Shoot. I'll take the message and ring him right up."

Chan said as patiently as he could, "Are you going to hook me into the fire line so I can talk to him, or do I have to build a fire and send smoke signals? I don't want to send a message. I want to talk to him."

Arthur's voice said offendedly, "I just thought if he was busy or something—" The line crackled and hummed as the switches snicked in the office twenty miles away, and the receiver rattled an ear-cracking razzberry in Chan's ear as Arthur Ellison rang in on the fire line, three shorts for Buck.

Instantly the last *bra-a-a-ck* snapped off Bun Gaylord said, "Buck Mountain."

"Chan Dragoon, Bun. See can you spot me a smoke over Green Ridge. Lays almost in line with Aspen for me."

"Check," came the faint voice. Chan could hear the scraping and jarring of feet which somehow always came over the line better than the voices it was supposed to carry, and then Bun said, "Can't spot it, Chan. Whole slope's bouncing with great haze. Wait'll I try Haystack."

Another voice said, "I'm on, Bun. Pretty jumpy from here, too. Are you pretty sure, Chan?"

Chan craned his neck to look from under the overhang of the porch roof, but from this spot, forty feet below his lookout platform, he couldn't see it.

"Can't tell. It hung pretty steady from up in the tree, and should be on the far slope of the ridge." Twittering of wire static and scraping of feet and a squeal as a casement window was slid out.

Then Eddy Bryant on Haystack said slowly and dubiously, "That'd be about the northeast corner of twenty-nine, wouldn't it?" Chan mentally thumbed through the accurate map he carried in his head, and grunted agreement.

"No—hey! You're not so blind as I thought you were, you old mossback. Right

about the corner. . . . Wait'll I swing the firefinder on it and I'll give you the thing to a gnat's—"

"Above the dogleg in Annie crick, ain't it?" interrupted Chan.

"Yeah," said Eddy. "That where you make it, Bun?"

Bun Gaylord said dubiously, "You eagle-eyes got me. I get a good shot here, and I can't see even a cigar butt smoke. The haze is bouncin' pretty high."

"I'll get on it," said Chan. "Thanks."

"Any time," said Eddy from Haystack lookout. "Looks like we'd better chip in and buy Bun a pair of cheaters."

"You can go—" said Bun heatedly, and then Arthur Ellison cut in from his timekeeper's shack at Camp Nine.

"You got a smoke, Dragoon?"

"That's what I'd like to find out," said Chan. "I'm pullin' out right now. Get Al Bestraine and pass the word. Northeast corner of section twenty-nine. I'll phone from Annie Trestle when I get a chance. He can check with Buck for smoke if she hots up."

"But what if—" said Arthur, and Chan said brusquely, "Gotta go to a fire." He hung up and tramped down the steps on his crunching calks, lifted the water bag off its nail without breaking step, and slid into his beat-up old pickup truck.

The pickup was always ready. In the long wooden box on the bed, a six-foot bucking saw was chocked, along with a double-bitted axe. Three long-handled shovels clattered with two mattocks—referred to invariably as grub hoes—and the water bag hung on the right door handle where it had worn a long arc against the door paint in its swinging on rough roads. A smoke-chaser's rig without frills, stripped to bare essentials, and Chan wasn't sure but what it was a mixed blessing. No radio.

That had been one of the things at the fire meeting. Chief Bestraine had plugged for a radio for Annie Station. Art Ellison had pooh-poohed it. *"He's got a phone at his front door,"* he said, *"and the only fire he covers is what pops in his own sector."* A bright boy, Arthur. He took time to butter up Bestraine, too.

"...look, your crew covers the hot spots anywhere they show, Chief. If you split the crew, you've got to keep contact. If you've got a radio for you and one for Lauder, you're in touch all the time. And a couple of hundred dollars worth of equipment won't be gathering dust down at Annie Station."

What he didn't say was that the brains wanted to shut down Annie Station, entirely.

Well, it was an argument, all right. And a radio could be a headache to a smoke-chaser, too, what with some officious character wanting a full report every fifteen minutes when a man ought to be down in the brush making trail. . . . Anyway, no radio for Chan Dragoon. The pickup motor howled protestingly, and the steel body clanged and clattered as he drove it too fast for these roads, because that's what a 'chaser did for his dough—got on it and smacked it down before it got going. An hour—a half-hour—could make the difference between a smoking smudge and fire on the mountain.

IT WASN'T big, but it was hot. Dead brush, trampled down under the tractor's treads when this country had been logged a few years back, a cull cut from a long-butted pine; dry and dead saplings crowded out by more vigorous growth.

The prevailing breeze was from the west, which threw the creep of fire up against the slope so that the very little blue-gray smoke was fanned and dispersed to fade off into the general heat haze. A new, seeping scar made a twisting spiral down the trunk of a tall cull fir, and told its story to Chan. A lightning stroke had ended here, ripped its twisting streak down the fir's sappy sheath, to ground in the earth.

The strike had touched off the litter under the tree in its instant of incredible heat, and it had incubated there sullenly all night until the hot dry breeze fanned it to life; and now it was moving out, spreading like spilled water on a greasy plate. It had hard dry fuel, now, and it crackled and spat viciously in a rough oval that was nearly a hundred feet across the widest part.

Chan left the pickup squarely in the middle of the dusty road; as safe a spot as he could see for it at the moment. He left the keys in the ignition lock and lifted the water bag off its handle, dragged a shovel and grub hoe out of the shallow truck bed and moved in on it. As he pushed

through the stiff, head-high manzanita, he sized up the situation in alert disgust, but did not let what he saw stampede him. Hot, maybe too hot, for one man. She'd beat him out of an hour's time, perhaps two, with the heat haze and smokeless fuel, and now she had the bulge on him. No radio. The hotshots from Camp Nine needed them worse. Got to keep in contact.

He took a moment to assure himself the stub limb where he was hanging the water bag was sound. Then he sweated the dull, sullen anger out in trailing this baby—not flailing into it with the frenzy that crackling fire can generate in a man, but steadily, without a wasted movement or a second's pause; the quick flirting scoops with the shovel, not too deep but deep enough to cut the litter; using the grub-hoe, like a blunt axe on one face and like a deep curved hoe on the other, to hack at stubborn roots or turn a sullen rock out of its bed.

Only one basic way to fight fire in the brush. Contain it. Surround it. Fire is a bottomless pit of appetite, but it is not an entity. It co-exists wih its fuel, and when it has consumed its fuel it dies. So you trail a fire, surround it with a path narrow or wide, a path cut to unburning earth and cleaned of twigs and needles and trash. The other weapons of the fire-fighter—backfires, felling of snags that might burn to fall across the trail, dynamiting, wetting and damping out with water—all these are secondary measures. Trail it first, contain it, ring it with that first thread-like barrier to further fuel; then take a breather and think about knocking it down to size.

Axiomatic. Basic.

A smoke-chaser starts throwing dirt without having to think about it. But there are times when it's one man and a hot little sonofabuck; when she's too big for one man and too hot to leave untended while you run for help; and then's when it's in the laps of the obscure gods to whom a 'chaser prays so bluntly and profanely.

No time for a really good job. A couple of feet wide, this sketchy trail, and just deep enough to clean the litter off the dry-as-dust earth; an eye to dry brush to be mauled down with the grub hoe and tossed clear; a sharp dogleg in the trail, now, to avoid a rocky outcrop where the brush and thick, stubborn grass would take too long to fight. Pass it by. What's thirty-forty square feet of brush and grass when the timbered mountain lies defenseless before the gaping womb of spreading flame? Start your line on a curve that tails off into the breeze. Fire'll go around it, eventually, but maybe . . . for a while . . . nothing else to do. Cut in close to the face of fire at first but angle out as you go, because the fire won't wait for the trail to close it in. Not this baby. She's hot and eager and—*Waugh! What'd I do with that water bag?*

A dry white skeleton of manzanita flared up in a tossing ball, and the hairs crisped and curled on Chan's forearm. Without breaking the rhythm of his tossing shovel he hurled a load of dirt ten feet to spray and knock flame out of the bush. It snapped back as fast as he could bat it down, and then a ten foot sapling burned through and fell across the bush, and a blazing stick like a fat cigar came spinning across like a gob of mud thrown from the end of a willow with by an ornery kid. The little blazing stick hit and skidded and fire burst out from it like splattered oil. Chan took three frantic strides and scooped and threw, and the flaring shovel-load went spraying back on the fire side of the trail. About then it came to him that he couldn't make it.

CHAPTER 2

THE breeze came steadily across the slope, not heavily, but pushing at the fire that flared so hotly and cleanly. The breeze, hot already, slid through the fire and swelled and hurried with this further heat, and Chan's shirt rubbed dry and rasping on his inflamed hide. He breathed this same superheated air, and his lungs protested and his throat rasped dryly, and the licking fire crawled remorselessly upon him and drove him out at a wider angle, pushed and thrust and harried him back to where the thick green brush grew—and dammit to hell, a man couldn't trail this stuff fast enough to stay ahead.

He flailed at it with the axe face of the grub hoe, but manzanita is a tough and implacable wood, and the bush was as big and cumbersome lying on its side as it was standing, and no place to stack it or shove it aside. The fire crackled with its dry sardonic mirthful sound, lashed at him with its heat.

He came to where his water bag was hung, and took a great gulping drink, letting the water slither out the corner of his cracking lips so that it ran down the creases of his leathered neck.

The blessed coolness helped, and his rasping throat eased in its gulping of hot air. He fumbled the cork back in and realized his hands were shaking. One sleeve flapped about his scratched forearm with the button torn from the cuff. His knuckles were scraped and one finger throbbed under its puffiness where he'd reached over a stiff manzanita stub to chop, and hammered the finger between the stub and the handle.

Shouldn't have stopped—even this long. Knees shaking. Can't have been more than an hour, either. Well, maybe. Past noon, by the sun. And you make no trail standing around with your finger in your ear, bucko. *What the hell, you ain't goin' to make it alone, nohow. . . .*

He buried that thought, quick and deep. His hands curled around the grub-hoe handle like two fitted grafts of wood, and he took up the steady hacking and scraping that tore a trail out of the reluctant earth. The fire crackled gleefully and quartered in on him. Then the breeze shifted.

It hauled around to slip across the slope, talking very softly through the leaves of the head-high manzanita, and for a second all the fight went out of him.

That tore it. With the prevailing breeze crowding the fire on him, he'd had to give way; with this shift, now, the immediate pressure was off him, but way back at the hooked beginning of the trail the fire would crawl around—across the slope into the thick brush and the thickets of sapling fir and—*Katy bar the door, bucko—this ain't no one-man smoke no more. . . .*

Then he stood a moment longer in rigid, shaking anger, cursing with a silent terrible desperation the job and the men behind the job, and their politics and their petty stinking thinking that was tearing the footing from under him and smothering his hands in its web. With a radio in the pickup, he could have called for help an hour ago. Without one, he hadn't dared leave the pressing fire to rattle the five miles to a phone—and even if the lookouts did spot more smoke and alert the camp fire crew, they'd stand by for a while to await word from him—*Git off the dime, bucko—it's still your baby!*

HE COULDN'T get his breathing straightened out, and he paused and took three long steadying breaths before he cranked the handle of the phone in the box at Annie Trestle, and the snap with which the receiver came off the hook at the other end told him Arthur had been waiting for the call.

"Chan Dragoon. Gimme Al Bestraine."

"What does it look like, Dragoon?"

"I'm goin'ta need some help. Gimme Bestraine."

Arthur's voice slid up a notch and he said anxiously, "It isn't going to get away from you, is it?"

Chan let his temper slip from its taut leash and he roared in sudden fury, "Hell no, it ain't goin' to git away from me! I got the damn' thing between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Howinhell can it git away from me? Now git me Bestraine 'fore the whole damn mountain goes up, will you!"

The line chittered and buzzed for a long moment, and then Arthur Ellison said queerly, "Chief Bestraine isn't here, Dragoon. He went out to check the Buck strike—"

"Well, get Lauder on it. Dynamitin' Saint Peter, man, this bonfire ain't goin' to wait!"

Again the twittering gap, and then Arthur said, "Sure, Dragoon. I'll get right on him."

"Okay. Tell 'im to take the old Number Thirty-six grade out to the Section Twenty-nine road and swing right for Annie Creek. I'll catch him there. And tell him to hump it."

Then the sudden suspicion hit him, and he demanded harshly, "Lauder's there, ain't he? He's got the crew handy?"

Arthur Ellison said with that peculiar reluctance, "They're down clearing out fire hazard at Squaw Creek Trestle. But Lauder's to call in every hour—"

In his outraged fury, Chan sent one short ugly word snarling over the wire and slammed the receiver back on its prongs. His fingers shook with the squeezed grip he held on the bell-shaped handful, and he fought the wild rage down within him, fought it while he put his mind to work on the next thing to do.

That egg-suckin', boot-lickin', penny-pinchin', politickin' thus and such! Hurt his

nickel-nursin' little soul to see a crew drawing pay on a stand-by basis. Had to put 'em out to make a show—cutting weeds at a trestle ten miles out of camp! Oh, that dirty nigglin' little. . . .

And all the time another detached portion of his brain was working on what must be done, and his hand went to the crank and ground out four short rings, and the Duke, who was trainmaster and disptacher, barked roughly, "Yeah?"

"Chan Dragoon, Duke. You got a speeder loose? Can you get it out to pick up the gandy dancers and shoot 'em down to Annie, where the fire road crosses?"

Duke's voice came alertly and sparing of words, "Got a hot one, Chan?"

"She's boomin'. No fire crew in camp, and she ain't no one man show, Duke."

Duke's pencil went *tack tack tack*, rapping on the desk top a few inches from the phone so that the sound came clearly to Chan's ear while the dour little trainmaster checked his train-sheet, and then Duke's dry unflurried voice said, "I can get a speeder out in five minutes, Chan. He'll have to pick up the section gang north and come back. I'll hold the mill train at Oak siding and clear the speeder through with the crew. But it'll be an hour and half, best I can do. How far is your fire from the crossing?"

"Pretty close to five miles, Duke."

The pencil rapped like a clock ticking and then Duke said, "Too far to hike it. Can you stand by to haul 'em?"

"I'm all alone, Duke. I got to get back on it."

"Sure. I'll see can I get a candy wagon out to pick 'em up. Anything else, Chan?"

"Well," said Chan dryly, "You might pray for rain."

"If I had that kind of pull, I wouldn't be on this job. Luck, Chan."

The receiver clicked on its prongs, and almost instantly the phone burred and jangled out a long steady ring—the mill ring. That would be Arthur calling up the brains down there, getting in his spade work, proving his alertness in emergency and, undoubtedly, assuring himself that his version was heard first.

And, thought Chan grimly, *if I had fifteen or twenty of those windbags up here, they could always talk the damned fire to death.* But he found himself trotting to get the pickup rolling back to the fire again.

THE note in its voice had changed when he got back. And it wasn't an oval eating its way out any more. It made a thick crescent, blunted on one end against the skimpy trail that butted into the road—and the other end, the sharp end, drove a red spreading wedge angling into the slope with the fresh breeze hurrying it along, and even as he watched a thicket of young second-growth fir was caught with one licking tongue of flame and went in a great sound of ripping silk—if silk came in acre-sized bolts and was ripped up the middle by a giant in a hurry.

The fire had been sulking along, waiting for something like that. It exploded through the thicket in a great wallowing surge, switching its laughing crackle to a great booming triumphant roar—with this swelling, slow-motion explosion it proclaimed dominion, and gleefully hurled the snapping, burning trash that its own draft blew aloft, lofted it and hurled it ahead as seeds of its being, and where the seeds fell they bloomed and grew their own nodding, beckoning little stalks of flame.

The smoke was making now, thick and acrid, and Chan left the road at an oblique angle, trailing dumbly and stubbornly because he had to do it. no matter how useless—because it just wasn't in him to stand by while it burned. He couldn't stop it, and he couldn't keep himself from trying. He and the round-point No. 2 shovel were one and inseparable, with the hickory haft grown into the very meat of his fingers, just as the smoke was all his lungs had ever breathed.

Once a terrified rabbit bolted past him—through him, really, for it jinked and leaped through the angle formed by the shovel and his bent body—a moment later two squirrels, flowing and rippling over the litter as fluid as two blobs of silvery-gray water, *chip-chipping* in breathless horror at the howling, hurting monster that destroyed their world behind them. A gray-white-black camp-robber swooped down on silent wings to teeter on a bough and eye him beadily, cocky and assured as a camp-robber always is, superior in his possession of wings too fleet even for fire; but only a numb little disinterested corner of Chan Dragoon's brain took note, and the shovel snicked and clinked and sliced, while the dull anger drove him at it without respite.

He'd tried to tell 'em. He wasn't much with words, but he'd tried. You can't buck nature—not forever. You can cut her trees, tip them over and limb 'em and slice 'em up into boards, and when you've used 'em up here you go someplace else. And the litter—the useless limbs and tops and cull butts and the smashed brush—dies and dries, and one day the spark is struck—a careless match or a lightning stroke, or a steel cat-tread striking fire on a rock....

No, man didn't bring fire to nature. It had been there always—you didn't find a tree in the woods over a foot at the stump but what it had its fire marks, black streaks charring its lower bark. But the big burns, the acres and square miles of blackened snags and scorched earth—those came after men tried to buck nature.

Virgin forest is its own fire-fighter. The towering giants shade the littered forest floor, crowd out and kill brush, grow the thick insulating bark that fire might lick without real damage—that tolerates fire without encouraging it. All lightning finds to feed its newborn is the thick, damp litter of shed needles and tiny twigs, and it smokes sulkily and creeps about in the damp, inhospitable shade until winter storms damp it out for this season. And the shed needles sift down again to complete the cycle.

Men disrupt the cycle. They create trash and remove the shade and dampness. They windrow the tall giants like wheat and depart without plowing under the straw and chaff of their threshing. Oh, lately they have been burning their slashing, perfunctorily, to the legal minimum; but they still haven't figured what to do about the brush.

It moves in, the ubiquitous brush—tough, tenacious, crowding, smothering—ripe for fire, and man has two choices left, with half a century of error behind him. Eternal vigilance or a heartbreaking housecleaning job. Which narrows it down to the one choice of vigilance, with smoke-chasers like Chan Dragoon, with fleet efficient fire-fighting equipment like Chief Bestraine's—and still one day that is not enough, for as surely as the earth turns, the race of man will produce fools. One lucky year, or two, or three, and the fools begin to look around and see the extra men piling up overhead. They forget the Tillamooks and the Bandons and the Swan Lakes and the Klamath Canyons....

CHAPTER 3

HE LOST the trail. The fire came rolling, and three great manzanitas growing in a clump went up, shaking long flapping blankets of flame to the wind, and a hatful of blazing leaves and twigs shook out of the blankets and spilled across the scratch of earth that was the trail. The little spot-fire cackled and crackled and giggled happily, and while Chan slapped it down with shovels of earth, the main fire line assaulted his trail a hundred feet beyond—thrust and probed and shoved with flaming fingers, caught a pine cone here and a twig yonder, flared up in needles bone-dry and ripe, and Chan Dragoon was pocketed between two minor horns of the fire, and it was high time to get the hell out of there.

But he stuck there a moment longer, watching the two hundred yards or so of trail he'd beat out with his heart's blood going under and to hellandgone; a gray man, not tall, not young any more, watching himself get whipped—the bitterest thing that a man can admit to himself.

He didn't run. He'd been around too long for that. He shouldered the shovel and tramped with the stiff-ankled stride his calked boots gave him, picked up the grub hoe from the stump where he'd leaned it last, and cut back toward the road. Once he stepped up on a stump, dead and shedding its dry bark and streaked with pitch—*Won't she holler when she gets her teeth into this*—looked out at the thick crescent that wedged through his breached trail; the probing horn that had tried to cut him off melting back into the greater body of the fire now.

Then he was flogging his tired body into motion again because that was how it was with Chan Dragoon—he was a 'chaser and he fought fire; he'd keep on fighting it until one or the other gave out; but this time the odds were all with the fire, for it grew moment by moment, and Chan Dragoon was driving himself with a whip of numb, unthinking anger.

The road ran roughly from northwest to southeast, generally following the meandering of Annie Creek a half-mile below. They'd logged this side of the ridge years ago, out of old Camps Three and Four, logged and moved on, and now the moun-

tain was coming back, a little. Second growth stuff was up and crowding, pines too small to cut twenty years ago were near merchantable timber now; and the brush—the damned, crowding, choking brush—crept and crawled and covered the slope like sheep's wool, fought with the second-growth thickets, blotted out trails, even took over the abandoned railroad grades....

Chan trudged out to the road, hearing the heightened idiot laughter of the fire behind him with a sort of dismal fatalism now. It caught another thicket of young fir, Christmas tree size, gulped it in with its triumphant whooshing roar, and he did not turn his head to look. Once he eyed the sun in its westering, and thought, *She'll be shifting again,* and again the dull anger stirred inside him, because there'd be a quarter-mile face to the fire now, what with this run north and west, and he was a puny little bug scrambling through the brush trying to stop a world afire.

He didn't try to corral his anger, or reason about it. He needed it, as a drunkard needs whiskey or a starving man needs food. He hadn't anything else to draw on. Without stopping, he tramped past his parked pickup and back down his original trail, where the last thick chunks smoked and flared sulkily, now that the parent fire had moved off and away on the shifting breeze. Chan dropped the mattock, and set his shovel into the litter in his next motion, moving with a slow grinding determination that was all he could force out of his stupid tiredness.

HE HEARD the screaming of a motor protesting at being driven too hard in third gear, heard its brakes squeal the way they always did when the brake drums got sifted with dust, and he waited a moment until they'd had time to shut off the motor, then sent a squalling yell up toward the road to tell them where he was. They yelled back, and then he could hear them clattering and crashing up yonder. It was Bert Lauder and five men.

Lauder was young, two years out of college, and he looked like the fullback he'd been—good shoulders and solid legs—he wore a forest-green shirt open at the neck and his warden's badge glinted on his left shirt pocket flap. His snug jeans were rolled to the tops of his twelve-inch boots, and his black crusher hat was set well forward and the brim was raked up fore and aft.

He came striding down the little trail and called, "You all right, Dragoon?"

"Why not?" grunted Chan. He rested against the sloped shovel a moment, part of him numbly resenting the fresh untired strength of the man while another part almost wept in relief at help coming. He rolled his tongue around in his mouth, trying to dampen the dry croaking of his voice and said, "String 'em through here, will you, Lauder?"

The others came trampling behind Lauder, shouldering shovels, and Lauder swung a quick puzzled look out at the sullen smoking burn, and back to Chan.

He said with a touch of uncertainty, "Dragoon, she's bulling it back up the road. We'd better head her off up there before we fool with this back-trail."

Chan felt the wild anger coming up again, but he said merely, "Don't let it fool you, Lauder. She's burning cut-over up there. If she comes across here and gets into the green stuff we'll have something on our hands. Let's get this first."

He could see the uncertainty in Lauder. He swung on those long solid legs and stared back at the slow methodical consumption of the burn that now worked away from the trail, and then he said sharply, "Man, she's running out on us! We can't fool with a lousy back-trail with the face heading away from us. You gone crazy, Dragoon?" He stared hotly at Chan a moment longer, then wheeled back on his waiting men and said crisply, "Back to the road. We'll corral that face and then—"

Chan said, "No you won't."

Lauder turned back to him, almost violently, and the crew shuffled and then halted in puzzlement.

"Now, look—" said Lauder.

"Look yourself," said Chan. "This is my baby, and I'm handlin' it. String these boys out here and let's get some trail made. She'll be boomin' through here inside of an hour, and she won't be foolin'. Now get on it."

Lauder stared. He cuffed his hat back with one hand and the fingers of his other hand fumbled absently with the glinting green-tree badge on his pocket flap.

Chan Dragoon said almost viciously, "I got one of them badges, too, Lauder. Wore it while you was still in diapers, and that makes me senior man. Grab a shovel and get to work!"

His hands clenched on the shovel haft to control the trembling, and he felt that fine tremor of tiredness shaking his whole spent body. And when Lauder still stood, keeping that hot staring look on him, Chan said, with a thin thread of hysteria cutting through the gravelly scratching of his voice, "Dammit, move!" His clawed hands lifted the shovel and cocked it like a clumsy axe. "You'll stand and yammer while the whole damned mountain goes up. Move, damn you, or I'll knock your thick head off!"

Lauder had not provided himself with a tool when he left his truck. One of the crew carried an extra shovel. And Lauder stood within easy reach of Chan Dragoon and the long-handled shovel, its blade worn thin and sharp with much work.

Lauder said thickly, slowly, "It's on you, Dragoon. It's going in the report. You pulled seniority on me."

"Move," said Chan grimly, and Lauder took a shovel from old Jason Grubb and moved past Chan.

The rest filed silently by, and spaced themselves without orders some thirty feet apart and started to cut trail, working with the silent nervous ferocity of digging terriers, and Chan set his own shovel at it, in the same numb rhythm.

His section of trail linked up with that of the man ahead, and he shouldered the shovel and tramped past, not looking at the man or the others he passed, and Lauder did not look up as Chan came by. His big shoulders rolled under the neat clean shirt, and the trash slid away before his working shovel in prodigious bites.

Only to the lead man did Chan speak. "Swing it a little north, now," he said briefly, shoving out an arm to indicate.

The man, old Grubb, grunted acknowledgement and shifted a little, pitching his shovel loads with the careful, precise movements of a man who knows his work.

GRUBB wasn't hurried, he wasn't outraged. He'd dig his trail where he was told, and if that didn't hold it, he'd fall back and dig another—and when he was tired he'd quit. For a moment an edge of icy self-doubt cut at Chan Dragoon. He'd pushed this thing pretty hard. He was senior to Lauder, true. But Chief Al Bestraine was the head man, and Chan's superior, and Bert Lauder was Bestraine's second in command. If she didn't swing back—if he'd pulled a boner, shoved a crew at building trail where the fire wasn't— He listened to the dull far-off voice of triumphant fire. He lifted his head to eye the sun in its westering, and realized from his sudden giddiness just how dangerously tired he was.

Maybe they're right and I'm wrong, he thought. *Get out on the face and bull her through, and if she swings, let 'er go to hell and take the mountain—play it by the book and quote chapter and verse—it'll grow back sometime. . . .*

But it wouldn't come back, not in his lifetime or another lifetime to come, perhaps. The cycle again. Brush in the burnt clearing, a few scrubby pine and fir saplings fighting for life, all ripe for the next spark. Maybe the scars would stand a hundred years to show where man had tinkered. And if it got into the green timber. . . . He did not straighten up as Bert Lauder tramped past him to take up another section ahead, still strong and untired, and unforgivingly silent.

Then they both heard the thin crying, back up on the road, the sound of the siren that would be Chief Bestraine belatedly hurrying, and Lauder gave Chan one close hard look of triumphant malice before he hurried to slice more trail that would show Bestraine where he had been forced to work. Chan slowly straightened his back and locked his hands on the shovel, using it as a staff.

Up on the road the siren died in a tired, irritated whine, then yipped again twice, urgently, inquiringly, and Lauder bawled out a strong, "Ya-a-ah-ho-o-ooo!" back along the trail.

Chan let himself slump in the tiredness, lifted his eyes under the black-pocked hat brim across the intervening brush, and the slow-licking heat of the burn, followed the high rolling clouds of the smoke; black climbing smoke boiling out of fire that chewed faster than it could swallow; watched it rear up straight in a great fountaining pillar as another thicket of brush

and second-growth bloomed. The sun showed as a dime-sized disk, dull red like drying blood—and Chief Al Bestraine was crashing heedlessly down through the brush from the road, disdaining the trail in his hurry.

Chan Dragoon let out one tired sigh, and slowly his hands slid down the work-polished haft of the shovel.

Bestraine looked mad. Chan couldn't blame him for that. The chief'd had to come by the face up the road, past the reaching, creeping face of the fire, and here was the crew. . . .

Bestraine didn't say anything. He sent his searching look in one quick comprehensive sweep of the trail, a look that ended with a moment of close regard as he came to Chan. Then he plunged across the trail and past the rest, who did not look up, swung out to avoid the creeping of the slow backwash of the burn, and disappeared into the brush to the northward, flanking the fire to take his own comprehensive survey of the situation.

Chan raised his eyes again to the tall vaulting smoke cloud, watched it soar and uncoil its lazy shrugging shoulders, watched it drift as it hit its peak, saw, when very slowly, very delicately, that peak began to lean and ravel out, saw the faint gray threads begin to weave up through the black as fire fell back on fire to consume its fuel more thoroughly, and suddenly his hands were slipping back to the old accustomed spots on the slick handle, and his cracked croaking voice rasped at the lagging crew viciously.

"Now dig, damn you! Git in there with the chickens and scratch, you sonsabucks! Here she comes, and you'll dig or burn!"

Bert Lauder straightened up, looked back at Chan, stared out across the burn and lifted his head to follow the blunt heavy column of smoke. The smoke toppled like a slow-falling tree before the shifting breeze, began to shred out about halfway through its fall, split up by the fickle breeze that was not completely decided yet. Chan waited for that much, then he bent to his shovel. He pushed his section of trail to link up with the tail of the one ahead, and then the smoke came in on them, scudding low and thick, dirty gray-brown and hot.

He heard Lauder whoop, up ahead, and there was enough of the grim humor left inside him to get a lift out of that—he trudged past a couple of the others, paused long enough to throw a dozen scoops of dirt to help close up Jason Grubb's section with the next. Lauder whooped again, and from out in the brush Al Bestraine yelled back.

He came plunging out of the thickening smoke, just as Chan came up abreast of Lauder. Bestraine was sweating a little and his expression was about midway between mad and anxious.

He said, "Damn it, Chan!" and Chan Dragoon, with that touch of grim laughter helping a little against the awful tiredness, said dryly, "Yeah, ain't it?"

Bestraine looked back down the trail where the last three men were just closing up and said to Chan, "What do you think?"

Chan said almost gently, "She blows this way most always, Al. Sometimes she shifts along in the afternoon like it did awhile ago, but it always comes back."

Down on the road a truck roared past, transmission gears howling. That would be the candy-wagon the Duke was sending to pick up the section crew at the crossing. Five miles, or a little under, each way—half an hour at least, on these roads. The smoke rolled in earnest, now, and the first hot breathing of the fire came in thin scorched ribbons of air that curled around them in stifling little eddies.

Bestraine said suddenly, "All right. Stick here, in a bunch where I can find you. Widen out and clean up what you've got. Back in a minute."

HE WENT at a shambling trot back along the thready trail, swallowed up in the smoke before he'd taken a dozen strides. Bert Lauder looked at Chan, squinting his eyes against the smoke, and said almost plaintively, "Why didn't you tell me, Dragoon? About the wind changing?"

Chan heard the roaring coming at them now, from out in the choking smoke fog. "Because," he said quietly, "you didn't want to believe me. You wanted to stand around and argue about it."

"Well," said Lauder, and Chan turned his back on the man and started flicking the trail wider with the tip of his shovel.

"Well, hell," said Chan roughly. "You can argue with *that,* now."

Close enough that it lighted the smoke with its glow, fire shinnied up a forty-foot fir, went twisting and looping up like a blunt snake that exploded in the crest needles and turned the tree into a great lily of flame that stood, stalk and blossom, perhaps seventy or eighty feet high.

"Argue with that," said Chan.

Al Bestraine came trudging back through the smoke. One moment he was a scuffing sound, and the next he was a dark blob in the fog that swelled into a man in two strides.

"Just radioed Haystack," said Bestraine. "He says he can see the fire-cat truck raising dust a couple miles down the road. The gandy dancers ought to be here pretty quick, now, too." He was breathing rather heavily with his hurrying, and his belly was shoving at the taut cloth of his forest green shirt. He'd pulled off his necktie and stuffed it into a hip pocket. He looked directly at Chan, and put out a hand. "Gimme that muck-stick, Chan. You're about beat out anyway. Go on down to the road and pilot the cat in. You can head the gandy-dancers in too, if they come first."

He had his hand on the shovel handle, and he had to pull a little before Chan could make himself turn loose. He looked closely at Bestraine, prying at the man's face, wondering a little resentfully if this was Bestraine's way of taking him off the fire. Then he recognized the justice in it, and let him have the shovel.

He was beat out. Even old Jason Grubb was in better shape. He could see the rightness of it, but still he left off with queer reluctance. This was his baby, and she still wasn't corraled; she was booming down on them now, and this was going to be the line—either they stopped her here, or she'd take the mountain.

Al Bestraine knew it too. He took the shovel and turned away in the same continuous movement as he said, "All right, boys, let's hit her." He pushed into the resisting brush, into the smothering blanket of smoke and was gone from sight like a pebble into quicksand. Chan trudged back down the trail.

The cat truck and the candy wagon arrived almost simultaneously, from opposite directions. The candy wagon, a ton-and-a-half truck fitted up with benches and a canvas top for transporting crews, disgorged its freight of gandy dancers—the railroad section hands—while the cat truck, a heavy-duty rig with a small crawler tractor and its V-drag on its reinforced flat bed, backed into a hole with its rear wheels so that the two unloading planks for the cat would not have too steep an incline.

The gandy dancers carried their own tools—square-pointed No. 2 track shovels with D handles and a few picks. Chan headed them into the fire trail and stood by while the cat skinner backed his tractor down the planks from the flat-bed truck and snaked the drag off. Then he walked ahead while the skinner, a cocky, grinning lad who was none the less a topnotch operator, followed with the snarling machine, the drag screeching and clanging, but gouging out a four-foot trail as it went.

ON THE road, they were clear of the smoke, but as he plunged back into it, the feeling came back on Chan of a world afire—the thick, dirty cotton of it clogging the throat, smarting in the eyes. The cat was mostly sound and a dim hulking shape behind him; and a hundred yards into it the rest of the world was gone and there was no reality, but that thick choking fog that ran from here to world's end, the claustrophobic certainty that no matter which way he might run he could never escape it; and when quite suddenly the smoke fog blew up in his face in a great swelling bloom of red, he nearly bolted.

A dark shape came crashing close past him on his right; and from the shape came a panicky blat as a great wavering hand of flame reared up as if to smite them all down. In the contagion of that panic, in that finely-divided sliver of an instant that separates thought from decision, Chan Dragoon almost gave way. His brain went out of mesh and all he knew was the fire that raised its punishing hand before him, the strangling, of thick smoke in his lungs, the almost tangible envelope of fear that surrounded this fleeing buck deer; and then, even before decision, the teeth of reason meshed again, and he was Chan Dragoon, the fleeing shape was a three-point buck with velvet making soft thick clubs of his antlers; and this was the break-through—the trail hadn't held the weight of fire pushed by the wind.

He spun on his calked heel and bawled

at the cat skinner and waved a frantic circling arm.

The machine roared in protest as the skinner snatched a lever, stamped a pedal, locked one endless track and yanked the machine around on a dime to cut almost a right angle. The drag was snatched around, slashing a nearly perfect circle with the slicing serifs of its V, and somewhere over beyond this leaping gout of flame someone yelled hoarsely and frantically. Chan Dragoon took three rushing strides to snatch the shovel off its brackets across the seat-back of the cat, almost fell down leaping back to avoid the drag, and then the skinner, not cocky or grinning, slammed the nose of his machine out into the brush, holding up one gloved hand and arm to shield his face from the red hell that licked up almost at the treads. Chan slid the shovel into the bare dirt behind the drag, lifted and threw with that practiced twist which fanned the dirt in a loose spray that blacked out a puny little penny-patch in the leaping red.

A scrubby, drooping fir with limber, feathery branches leaned across the dragged trail, offering its soft tinder of needles to the leaping flare of the brush, and Chan shoveled and tossed, lifted and tossed, slapping at the reaching flames, slapping at them with the only weapon at hand, racing with the fire for the length of time it would take to consume this flare-up.

Chief Bestraine swelled up out of the smoke and silently joined in, and automatically they fell into an alternating lift, swing, toss, that battered at the fire with spraying earth; a penny patch for each dollar rent, for even in the seconds of interval between shovels, the fire leaped and stretched and clawed upward at those hot pitchy needles.

Once Bestraine whooped again, but the rest of the crew was either too far away to hear, or they had troubles of their own. Chan envied him that yell—he hadn't strength enough to whisper. He'd caught a rhythm, but it was all he could do to hold to it. Once he let his eyes look up at the top of his swing, and the needles on the lowest branch of the fir were crisping and browning in this fierce heat. He tucked his head down again to shield his face with his hat brim as the heat seared even at his weathered hide.

They had scraped off most of the readily available loose dirt of the trail. Twice he scooped and threw, and little more than a token spoonful fanned off the shovel tip, and the next stroke clinked among rocks under the surface. He heard Bestraine grunting gustily at every savage gouge, and his own next shovelful was a fist-sized rock with a pint of pebbly earth around it. The rock sailed through the fragile sheet of fire and twigs with disdainful ease, and then quite suddenly the fire was dying down in this clump of brush, the twigs falling back through the heavier branches in a shower of cascading coals, the base limbs themselves, thick as a man's arm still burning, but more quietly, as isolated stems of fire sprouting from the thick flesh of the trunkless base. Bestraine threw one final sweeping shovelful and hooked his hands about the end of the haft and leaned his chest against it. He gulped at the thick scorching air with open mouth, and stared at Chan with eyes like two red boiled onions.

"By God, Chan," he said. "That was a hot one."

Chan Dragoon leaned on his own shovel, feeling the scratching of that air clear to his belly, trying wearily to decide which was least painful—to breathe this stuff or stop breathing altogether.

The cat bellowed out yonder, coming closer, and then the throbbing steel nose thrust through into their sight, and the treads screeched on rock as the skinner swung out and stopped.

A fine film of dust covered him completely now, and the shirt that had been clean and fresh half an hour ago was smudged and pocked with tiny fire holes. But he'd got some of his cocky grin back and he looked like a minstrel man partly made up where he'd licked some of the grime off around his mouth.

He bawled gleefully at Bestraine, "Trailed all the way to the road west—guess we got 'er."

He reached automatically into a shirt pocket and fished out a cigarette, stuck it between his lips and then took it out, looked at it distastefully and flipped it out at the fire in the brush.

He twisted around to reach the canvas water bag hung behind the seat, took a drink and silently offered it to Chan and Bestraine. Chan sloshed a little out of the

metal spout, took a rinsing mouthful and spat it out, then drank deep, tipping the damp squashy bag well up. It took some of the curse off.

The skinner took the bag back, said, "Won't hurt to widen 'er out all around," and pulled past them, they stepping aside as the drag scratched and slithered past.

BESTRAINE said inanely, "I hope that does it."

Chan said yeah, him too.

Then Bestraine said embarrasedly, "Chan, you did a job on this one. It'll go in the report." And again Chan said yeah.

Bestraine started to turn away then. He was the fire chief, and he couldn't rest easy until he'd made a complete circle of this baby to make sure of his trail. Then he turned back again.

Still embarrassedly he said, "That ain't all that goes in this one, Chan. And I'm making a copy for McCarran himself. It's going on the record about that snot-nose punk of a timekeeper pulling the fire crew out from under. And a requisition for another radio goes with the report."

"Yeah," said Chan again, and then because he knew Bestraine was trying, he added, "Thanks."

He clasped his filthy hands in a fresh grip on the shovel handle and looked out over the burn. The smoke was lifting now, thinning out as the fire simmered down to a steady feeding on the killed stuff it had hurried past before.

Yeah, it'll jolt 'em a little. They'll listen real respectful, for a while. Then they'll forget again. They'll look around and see the fire crew playing penny ante poker and drawing pay for it. They'll see an old mossback sittin' on his butt down at Annie Station drawing pay. And they'll see all the dollars' tied up in equipment—and they'll forget that all they've got a chance on now is just that bunch standing by—waiting and drawing pay for the time when they've got to go like hell—when a half-hour makes the difference between a hot little spot-fire on the mountain. . . .

Chief Bestraine still stood there, eager to get away, but still held back by something.

He said, "About Lauder, Chan—don't be too hard on him. He'll shape up, with a little time. He hollered a little about how rough you handled him, and well, you know, these young fellers, they're touchy. But I told him plain enough—if he keeps his eyes open, maybe some day he'll know as much about fire as you've forgotten."

Chan grunted without taking his eyes off the burn. A tall fir stood out there—McCarran Logging hadn't cut fir ten years ago—a tall one, straight and clean, a tree whose seed had sprouted when a crew of crazy idealists froze in a place called Valley Forge. A tree that had been flourishing and green when a nation split itself down the middle in a War Between The States—a tree tough and proud and lofty when the wagons came in their slow, dragging strings across a nation. It had ridden out its storms and sown its own seed and shaded this earth for hundreds of years—and now it stood, a stripped, blackened pole without needles or limbs, and the creeping little fingers of flame still played with the stubs that marred its starkness—pointing at the smoking sky like the accusing finger of an angry God. . . .

Chan Dragoon said quietly, musingly, almost to himself, "Why is it a hundred men can do the best they know how—and one damned fool can mess up the whole damned thing?"

Chief Bestraine, only half understanding, said helplessly, "That's just the way it is, Chan."

Chan said vaguely, "Sure," and shouldered his shovel.

He started to tramp down the trail, watching the burn as he went, because vigilance was all there was left—vigilance and a few stubborn damn fools that did what they could with what they had.

FOR A MAN'S VACATION IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS—

Arthur H. Carhart

will answer questions on Forestry and North American Big Game Hunting—without charge to Adventure's readers.

See ASK ADVENTURE, page 98.

KILLER SHIP

Upon the spray-clouded forecastle head he could see Brown—then the ship crashed down. . . .

By JOHN RHODES STURDY

THERE had been little wind that day and almost no swell, but in the early afternoon a gray cast appeared in the sky to the eastward and the Dutchman signaled by light: PRECAUTION—WEATHER MAY DETERIORATE RAPIDLY.

Wilson found the Aldis lamp in a corner of the rusty, half-stripped bridge and gave the Dutchman an affirmative in reply. A few minutes earlier he had been on the forecastle head and had inspected the enormous shackles and the heavy towline that ran out through the ship's stem. Now he returned the lamp to its box and indulged in one of his personally rationed cigarettes, leaning with his elbows on the binnacle and watching the other ships.

His was the K-99. The other two vessels were almost identical, and all three were in tow of the Dutchman, fanning out behind the tug on individual lines, with rudders locked so that they would hold sta-

A lifeless ship . . . a crewless skipper—and a red tide rendezvous. . . .

tions apart. Wilson's ship was on the starboard wing and always steered to the right. The next ship was directly astern of the tug and the third had her rudder set to port.

The Dutch, Wilson thought, were masters at this sort of deep-sea towing. The ships had taken up this formation shortly after leaving Halifax, and would hold it, he imagined, until they had crossed the Atlantic.

He was still a little amazed at the tug up ahead. She bore no resemblance to any tugboat he had ever seen. She was, in fact, larger than the vessels she was towing—over two hundred feet long, low in the water and with a streamlined superstructure, and paint as fresh and clean as a yacht.

Her tows were in strange contrast. Three ancient wartime corvettes, with paint peeling from their hulls and half of their upper decks stripped down, they were dead ships, without power in their engines, and with even the responsibility of steering taken from them. Three ghosts from the Battle of the Atlantic, going to yards at Bremen, Germany, to be converted into whaling ships.

A young man like Gerald Wilson could appreciate the incongruity of that.

He dragged deep at his cigarette until it was a half-inch butt and then he flipped it over the side of the bridge.

He went down the shaky ladder and made his way into the ship. Down here he could never get used to the silence, although he knew the ship was moving. He found himself always listening for sounds he felt should be there; the pounding of engines, the monotonous groan of a pump, or at least the clump of men's boots on the iron deck overhead.

He walked into what had once been the officers' wardroom and there he saw the only other person in the ship.

As he approached the sideboard he said, "The Dutchman expects a change in the weather."

The man on the settee turned his head only slightly. It was a large head, and it went with the man's body, which was huge.

"Well," he said.

The man—Bill Brown was his name—had made a pillow for his head from an old navy ensign, grey and dirty now, that somehow had been left aboard the ship years ago when she had been decommissioned. From under one of the folds of the flag, Wilson could see the neck of a bottle protruding.

ON THE sideboard was a glass coffee-maker, and Wilson found a mug and poured himself a cup of the hot brew. He had personally donated the coffee-maker for the voyage. The owners had provided oil for the galley stove and enough canned food to last, and given them a few lanterns to provide light in the wardroom here and in two of the cabins, but that was about all. You didn't have to do much for a couple of watchmen aboard a towed ship.

"If it starts to blow," Wilson said, "we'll double up our watches. Is that all right with you?"

"You giving orders, Admiral?"

Wilson felt his lips tighten at the mocking words. He saw a hairy arm, bare to the elbow, move on the settee, and a big hand reach under the ensign for the bottle.

Brown turned his head and gave Wilson a crooked smile. "Have a drink, Admiral?"

"No thanks."

"Don't you drink, Admiral?"

"Not at—" Wilson found himself saying, and broke it off.

Brown slowly sat up. "What were you going to say?" he asked. "Not at sea? Then where do you drink, Admiral—in your room at college? That must be nice, sitting around with all the other professors." He shook his big head slowly. "Trouble is, you don't look like a professor, Admiral. You don't wear glasses. You're not thin enough. You even comb your hair." He uncorked the bottle and drank what was left in it. "One thing I must say," he added. "You read a lot of books. I tried one. Couldn't get by the first sentence. That makes you a real professor, I guess."

"Why don't you forget it?" Wilson said, holding his mug of coffee.

"Well, I'll tell you why, Admiral," Brown said, leaning back on the settee. "This isn't much of a job, I'll grant you. And this isn't much of a ship. But I happen to be a seaman. I've got papers. Do you have papers, Admiral?"

"No."

"That's what I mean. Now you just relax and read your college books and have a

pleasant sea voyage for free. And if you want to walk up and down the bridge and make like you're an admiral of the fleet, that's all right, too."

The muscles of his heavy face appeared to tighten. "But when it comes to anything about the ship," he said, "like who's to stand watches, and when—you leave those to the seaman—me. You understand that, Admiral?"

Wilson took a sip of his coffee.

The big man got to his feet. "You understand that?" he repeated.

Wilson put down his coffee mug and said slowly: "We've got a long way to go, Brown. We have to live together. Why not be friendly about it?"

Brown stared at him. There was an ugly look in his eyes. "Sure," he said. He tossed the empty bottle onto the settee. "Just stick to your college books and we'll be friendly."

He turned and walked out of the wardroom, and Wilson, his hand trembling a little, took up his coffee mug again.

He had come closer than ever to a fight with Bill Brown. How much longer it could be delayed he did not know. And he realized, that when it came, the big seaman would probably kill him.

He walked to the bare wardroom table and sat down. It had been a mistake, this sentimental journey. At a club ashore he had met the jovial Dutch skipper, and when, in the course of a conversation he had mentioned he was going to England and had plenty of time, and wanted a chance to write a brief, the Dutchman had suggested a berth with him. A berth in the K-99, if he wanted that. They needed two men aboard each of the three towed ships, the captain had said.

And he had accepted. Dr. Gerald Wilson, the young university scientist, the expert on underwater weapons, going to England on a loan arrangement—going to England in a battered old corvette.

How foolish could a man be?

Because he had sensed danger from his first contact with Seaman Bill Brown. Seaman Brown with a hangover, jeering at Wilson's equipment, his clean blankets, his coffee-maker, his toilet articles in the leather case that his wife had given him last Christmas.

Seaman Brown, a man with troubles.

"SAM'S nice, but he'd be a lot nicer if he did something about that Dry Scalp! His hair is dull and unruly—and he has loose dandruff, too! I've got just the ticket for him—'Vaseline' Hair Tonic!"

Hair looks better... scalp feels better... when you check Dry Scalp

IT'S EASIER than you think! 'Vaseline' Hair Tonic checks Dry Scalp . . . makes a world of difference in the good looks of your hair. It's ideal with massage before shampooing, too. Contains no alcohol or other drying ingredients. It's double care . . . for both scalp and hair . . . and it's economical.

Vaseline HAIR TONIC
TRADE MARK ®

Listen to DR. CHRISTIAN, starring JEAN HERSHOLT, on CBS Wednesday nights.

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Probably fired from his last ship, and bitter. Scornful of a trunk that was lettered: G. WILSON, UNIVERSITY OF—and waiting for a chance to start a fight, from the first day, almost from the first hour.

The killing monotony of the dead, silent ship had only increased the man's apathy. The long nights and the uneventful days on a vacant, almost glassy sea—these had not helped, either.

Wilson finished the last dregs of his coffee. He went to his bare little cabin and lay down on the bunk, staring up at the chipped deckhead. His nerves, he knew, were on edge.

HE WAS awakened by the steel door of the cabin banging lightly against the bulkhead, and for a moment or two he still lay there, his mind filled with memories. He could feel the movement of the ship under him, for the first time, almost, since they had left Halifax; an easy roll that was not at all unpleasant, and when he raised himself to a sitting position and looked out the dirt-coated port he could see that the water had darkened slightly and was forming into low waves.

He dug into his cigarette pack, checking the contents before he allowed himself the luxury of a smoke. Then he left the cabin and, passing the wardroom, put his head briefly inside the doorway. Brown had not returned.

The wind hit him as soon as he came on deck, and he noticed there was a wet patch just abaft the port seaboat where spray had come over the side. The decks would be wetter than that before long, he thought, as he looked towards the sky and saw the dark clouds moving.

He climbed to the bridge and looked down at the forecastle head. Everything appeared tight there, and he turned his eyes ahead to the giant tug and saw her riding nicely, her stern low in the water.

He squatted behind the battered dodger to keep his cigarette out of the wind, and he puffed at it slowly, feeling lonely, wondering again why he had been fool enough to take a berth like this. When he looked up he could see the naked mast and yardarm, with one lonely halyard quivering in the breeze, noticing the unpainted section where the radar aerial had once revolved; conjuring up in his mind a picture of this ship as she once had been, with her guns mounted and depth charges stacked in rails on the now vacant little quarterdeck.

She was a sorry sight now. She and all of her class had ceased to function; wiped from the navy list as outmoded and obsolete, useless in a new age, with a new generation that had scarcely heard of her. And yet, only a few years back. . . .

THE DUTCHMAN had been right. The wind rose sharply and the skies turned black during the short time that Wilson had been on the bridge. The dark seas were flecked and scummy with white now, and the little ship had started to plunge, digging deeper and deeper with her bows until the stem was almost under, and the spray flew high over the forecastle head and up to the bridge.

To his left he could see the other corvettes starting to pitch and roll. They looked almost as though they were under way, under their own power, keeping station on one another as they had often done in convoy escort work. Their towlines were invisible to him now, and there was something strange and unreal about the sight of them.

He turned his eyes on the tug ahead. He saw her stern disappear every now and again as the waves grew higher and the troughs deeper, and he knew that her screws were turning over only enough to keep her head into the sea and take as much strain as possible off the towlines.

As Wilson stood there on the bridge, clutching the dodger, he realized that night and the storm were advancing together. Visibility had begun to drop and the other ships were becoming dim shapes.

He switched on the riding lights that were powered by batteries installed in the wheelhouse. He could see a stern light on the tug; a light that flickered on and off as she rode high and low, and he wondered what was happening aboard her.

The wind was whipping against his face, and for the first time there was salt in his eyes—he could feel them burn, and the taste of the salt was in his mouth when he moved his lips.

Behind him, suddenly, he heard a banging. He swung around to the stern of the

bridge and looked aft, and he saw the port seaboat moving between its davits.

He grabbed the ladder rails and he hit the deck below without his feet touching the steps. He staggered towards the seaboat, drenched by water that was coming over the side now. He got his hands on a loose line and pulled hard until he tightened and knotted it. He was breathless when he finished, and he leaned for a moment against the boat, trying to get the air back in his lungs.

The ship gave a sudden lurch and he lost his footing. The leather shoes he was wearing slithered on the wet deck, and his feet came up from under him as he tried to keep his balance. As he fell, the back of his head hit the housing of the funnel and a shriek of pain came close to his lips.

He was on his feet again, almost immediately, but his eyes were dimmed and he felt sick. And, then, as he grabbed a wire stay for support, something seemed to burst within his brain. His wet hands clenched and the veins of his neck tightened, and he fought his way forward and almost fell down the ladder to the wardroom flat. He stumbled and hit a bulkhead with his right shoulder, bounced away from it and reached the door of the wardroom.

There was still some light showing through the ports, and he blinked his watery and pain-filled eyes, trying to see. The wardroom was deserted.

He staggered with the pitch of the ship to the cabin where Brown lived. He held himself in the open doorway with a hand on each side, and he saw the dark figure of the man lying on the bunk. He skidded across the cabin deck and put out one hand, clenching it as he felt an arm.

He yanked and shouted, "Get up!"

The man rolled over and Wilson could see his heavy face and startled eyes.

"What—"

"Get on your feet!"

The arm jerked violently and Wilson fell backwards. He grabbed for the edge of the little desk on the forward bulkhead.

"Brown," he said, his voice shaking, "we're in a storm. It's getting worse. You've got to help. I need you up top."

He did not know whether the man was drunk or not. All he could see were the eyes staring at him from the bunk.

Suddenly he heard Brown's voice. "You need me! Why, you—"

"For God's sake, Brown, be sensible!"

"What's the matter, Wilson—you scared?"

When Wilson did not reply, Brown swung his legs over the side of the bunk. "I don't like anyone grabbing at me," he said. "I don't like you, Wilson."

His feet hit the deck, and Wilson could see the hairy arms and the big hands clenched. Wilson tried to move, knowing that in another second or two the big sailor would lash out at him.

But his eyes suddenly clouded and the pain in his head made him dizzy. He held on to the desk with one hand and with the other hand grabbed the edge of the door for support.

Brown advanced on him. Suddenly the big man laughed. "Seasick, Professor?" he asked.

Wilson raised his head. "I'm going back up top," he said thickly. "It doesn't matter now. You can stay here, Brown. I don't want you." He made an effort to straighten his back. "Just don't ever mention again that you're a seaman. You're not fit to be on this ship."

Brown brought his big fists together, "Who's telling me about a ship? You?"

Wilson braced his back against the jamb of the door, trying to clear his head. He felt Brown moving towards him and he knew suddenly that he was going to fight back, until he dropped.

"Go ahead, Admiral," he heard Brown say, "tell me about a ship. Tell me about this one."

And suddenly Wilson found himself saying, in a bitter rush of words: "All right, I'll tell you. I was captain of this ship. That's what I know about her. I was captain of her, and right now I wish to God I had one of the kids—just one of those seamen who served in the war with me aboard her. I'm going up top now. Don't try to stop me."

The big sailor's hands slowly dropped to his sides. His eyes stared through the gloom at Wilson's face; stared with a kind of surprise and disbelief.

"You—" he started to say.

The ship gave a tremendous lurch that was so violent and unexpected it tore Wilson away from the door and sent him reeling into the alleyway. He could hear Brown's muffled curses as he braced him-

self against the bulkhead and started toward the ladder.

IN HIS half-muddled mind he knew that something wrong had happened. The ship shouldn't be acting that way, he told himself. The tug wouldn't let her go abeam like this.

He came on deck. He shielded his eyes against the spray and the water coming over the side, and tried to look forward. He could see nothing, for visibility had dropped to almost zero, and even the tug's stern light had vanished altogether.

For a moment he believed that the towline had parted. And yet the ship did not seem to be falling away, only moving towards the left.

Then, with a sudden, frightening difference in the sound of the sea, he turned his eyes to port and saw another ship—a corvette—appear on the beam. He watched her come out of the mist, rolling and pitching, until her bottom was almost out of the water, reaching closer with every second.

His mind warned him: *We're going to crash.*

And yet, for an instant, he could not move. In numbed fascination he watched the other ship lean over in the violent sea and the gap narrow between them.

He realized then that it was not the other corvette that was closing. It was his own ship that was moving into collision, and the truth came to him at that instant. The locked rudder must have broken loose. Something had given way, and the ship's steering was out of control.

He fought to clear his mind. Collision and disaster were staring him in the face, and there was only one way to avert them. He had to get on the forecastle head and slip the shackle on the towline, break the connection with the unseen tug and let his own ship fall astern.

He turned on the deck, slipped and fell as a sheet of water swept over him. He half-crawled to the door of the wheelhouse and tried to slide it open. The door stuck, and he wrenched frantically until there was just enough space for his body to squeeze through.

He groped for the long hammer that was kept there for emergencies, and when he found the heavy tool, he squeezed his way back on deck.

The pain in his head was worse, and suddenly he felt dizzy again and he knew his strength was going out of him. He slipped down, a mist enveloping his eyes, and he tried to fight it—hearing the roar of the sea between the ships that were now terrifyingly close.

Then he felt himself being lifted. He heard a voice shout, "Give me that hammer!" He tried to shake his head and mutter something, and the voice shouted again, "Give it to me!"

He fell back against the side of the wheelhouse, and his clouded eyes saw Brown—Seaman Brown in a water-soaked shirt, a strange expression on his face, taking the hammer from Wilson's hands with an oath. For a moment the big seaman braced himself against the roll of the ship, and then he lowered his head and started forward on to the pitching deck of the forecastle.

Only a few yards now separated the two vessels, their hulls running plate to plate, and when one of them heeled over their bridge structures almost met. It seemed only a matter of seconds before the two steel hulls would crash.

Wilson shook his head violently, and his eyes seemed to clear a little. He pushed himself away from the side of the wheelhouse and turned forward.

Up on the spray-clouded forecastle head, near the winch, he could see Brown's dark figure. Then the ship crashed down into a trough and a sea came up, roaring as it hit the bows, rising in sheets over the deck and then washing back until it swirled around Wilson's legs and almost knocked him off his feet.

He lost sight of Brown, and in that instant he thought it was all over. But out of the spray and the gloom he suddenly saw Brown again, rising from a crouch, wielding something that Wilson could not distinguish but knew was the hammer—striking with it at the slip-shackle that held the towline.

The deck pitched again, and the two vessels almost touched. The water between them foamed up and raced past their hulls with a roar. Wilson, clutching blindly for support, saw Brown turn and start back across the swirling deck just as another wave burst over the forecastle.

It caught the big seaman from behind

and flung him against the winch, and his body seemed to straddle there for a moment; then he was hurled on his back across the deck, sliding helplessly towards the port side.

Wilson went forward, fighting the rush of water, losing sight of Brown again. In a nightmare of spray, the roaring sea and the dark, terrible shape of the other vessel that seemed almost to be overhanging them now, he prayed to keep his senses.

Then he saw Brown, lying only a foot from the port rail, and with what was almost his last ounce of strength, he ran forward a few staggering steps and dove headlong in the direction of the other man.

His groping, grasping hands touched one of Brown's boots and he hung on desperately, trying to pull the man away from the side of the ship. A roll to starboard helped him, and in that instant he heard the scrape of steel against steel, and clenched his teeth for the crash.

But when he raised his head he saw that his own ship was slipping astern of the other, and the breach widening. Brown had managed to break the towline. Wilson almost cried.

He had both hands on the seaman's legs, and now, inch by inch, he pulled the limp body back over the heaving deck, sometimes choking with water that swirled over and around them, still fighting to keep himself from blacking out.

He reached the wheelhouse door, and now he was able to rise to a kneeling position and try to get Brown through the partially opened door. The man's body was too big, and frantically he wrenched at the panel until he moved it back another few inches. He dragged Brown inside the wheelhouse and then he fell, exhausted.

PERHAPS it was only minutes, perhaps it was a long time, before he moved again. But the wheelhouse was pitch dark now, and he had to grope to find Brown. He held the man against the pitch and roll of the ship, listening to the roar of the wind and the sea outside.

Later—much later—he felt Brown stir to life and the seaman whispered hoarsely, "That you, skipper?"

Wilson nodded in the darkness. "Yes. How are you?"

"My back—it pains."

"Where's your whiskey? I'll get a drink for you, if I can find my way below."

The seaman did not reply for a moment. Then his labored voice spoke again. "That's a funny thing. I finished the last of it. Just a couple of bottles I had, to taper off from a bad one ashore." He seemed to pause for breath. "I got a little mixed up ashore. A little mixed up with you, too."

"You saved the ship," Wilson said.

Afterwards, when the wind was lighter, he helped Brown into the little sea bunk that had been wartime equipment in the wheelhouse. He left him then and went out on deck, and groped his way below, to the wardroom. The glass coffee maker had smashed into pieces, but with the aid of a flashlight he found a metal pot and brewed some coffee and took it up to Brown.

"I'll be all right," Brown whispered. "Maybe a couple of bones out of place, but I'm hard to crack. What's the answer now, skipper?"

"They'll be searching for us at dawn," Wilson said. "I think we're pretty tight and sound, and the wind's dropping fast. We'll just wait it out."

At the first glimmer of light he went back to the wardroom for more coffee, and then he noticed the old ensign that Brown had used for a pillow. With it over his arm he climbed to the bridge and looked out over the empty, rolling sea.

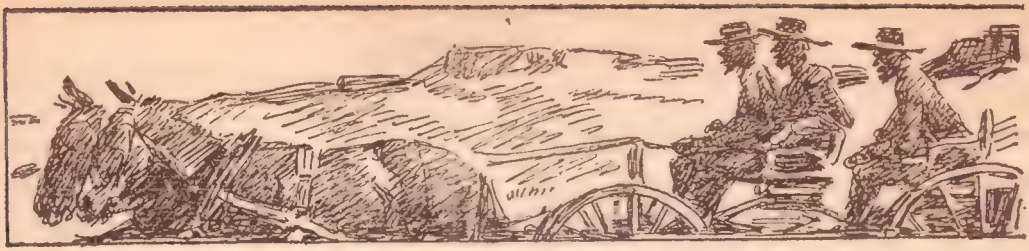
He bent the ensign on the lone halyard and sent the flag aloft to the yardarm. He had meant it to fly upside down as a distress signal, in case a strange ship spotted them, but when the old and tattered bunting flipped out with the breeze he realized that he had made a mistake.

The ensign was flying true—right side up.

He hesitated, and then he shrugged. The tug and other ships would be on the lookout for them, anyway, and a distress signal was unnecessary.

And then he grinned a little, looking up at the yardarm. Let the *K-99* have her flag again, he thought. She had worn it proudly once. Let her wear it once again.

And so he left it flying as it was, and he took a pot of coffee and the last of his cigarettes to Seaman Bill Brown, and there, in the wheelhouse together, they waited for someone to find them.



By BENNETT FOSTER

His gun held the riddle of his yesterdays. . . .

The gun from Eade's waistband smashed across and into Summer's face. . . .

THIS fellow gave the name of Eades Druerson when he hired on at the Tramparos outfit and if it was good enough for then it's good enough for now. He was around thirty years old, and that was all anyone knew about him, for he never said where he came from or what he had done. Evenings, after supper, when the others talked, Eades kept his mouth shut and braided on a fancy bridle he was making.

"Druerson's sure cagey," the boys said. "Nobody gets much change off him."

The Tramparos Cattle Company was

GUN SAVAGE

Eastern owned and J. M. Hern was the manager. He was a pencil-pushing sort of man who didn't know a yearling from a two; but Frank Larry, the wagonboss, was different. Larry was a cowman from who-laid-the-chunk—a hard old boot who worked the socks off his crew. Eades never got a good word from the wagonboss, no matter how he tried, but when the wagon pulled in after shipping, Larry put Eades in a camp.

"Better stock up on long-handles and a sheepskin," he said. "You're goin' to Carlitos."

The Carlitos camp was fifteen miles from headquarters and thirty from the town of Salamanca. It was a lonesome place, but Eades was contented as a flea on a fat dog. He did the riding, cooked, kept house, read some old magazines, and worked on his bridle. Once a month he went to headquarters, stocked up on groceries and got the cook to cut his hair. For company there was J. M. Hern, who came out to inspect, and Frank Larry prowling around. Eades had been in camp four months before he met the land seekers.

The Salamanca land district opened for filing on the first of March. On the second Eades made his ride in a cold drizzle and when he got back to camp he found a buckboard in the yard, and a livery team and three men under the shed. The men said they had started from Salamanca that morning. They intended staking claims on Charco creek but someway had got lost. Charco was close to town and no harder to find than a horned cow in a bunch of muleys, but the men were wet and cold, so Eades felt sorry for them.

"Come on in," he invited. "I'll build a fire and get supper. Your team's played out and you'd better stay the night."

That suited the men from the buckboard and they introduced themselves. The main one was Dr. Martin and he did most of the talking. Eades built a fire, then left his guests to warm themselves and did the chores. While he cooked supper and all through the meal he was besieged by questions and he saw that his visitors knew no more about the country than a baby. Eades had no use for a nester but he got interested and gave advice and passed out information. The men were green, but they listened to what Eades had to say.

While they washed dishes J. M. Hern arrived. He drove up in his buggy—he never rode a horse—and Eades went out to help unhitch. He told the manager about the land seekers.

"Our camps aren't hotels," Hern said. "You should have run them off. These damned homesteaders are ruining the country."

Eades hung up the harness and Hern went stamping to the house, surly as an old bull. He hardly grunted when Eades spoke his name to the others; he wasn't even civil. Hern acted like a spoiled kid and the worse he acted the worse Eades felt. Company was company in Eades' raising, and anybody was welcome to a bed and meal. Eades saw the nesters exchange glances and when Dr. Martin offered to pay for their accommodations Eades was ashamed of J. M. Hern. Hern had the grace to refuse, but things were unpleasant at Carlitos camp.

They were unpleasant in the morning, too, for Hern began rowing as soon as Eades shook down the ashes in the grate. Eades helped the land seekers harness their livery team and he gave Dr. Martin directions about reaching Charco creek and getting to Salamanco. When the buckboard was gone he walked over to Hern.

"You're a damned old pup!" Eades said. "Write out my time! I'm through."

Hern started to speak, then changed his mind because Eades looked mighty wolfy standing there. The manager turned away and Eades, disappointed, went to the corral where three company horses were waiting to be fed. Eades caught one and rode out into the horse pasture.

Carlitos camp was deserted when Eades returned, driving his two private mounts. There was a check on the table and that was all. Eades pocketed the check and packed up. He put his bed on one horse, his saddle on the other and pulled out. There was a lot of country over west that Eades aimed to see, but first he had to cash his check. He headed for Salamanca, following the buckboard tracks.

THE morning was clear, the sun was up and for three miles the buckboard tracks went straight. Then they turned, angling away from Charco creek. Eades stopped, puzzled for a moment, and shook his head. Those poor damned fools were lost again! It was aggravating but it was funny, too, and Eades had to laugh. He had quit a job and been ready to whip the boss all on account of three tenderfeet who didn't know straight up. Somebody had to take care of those people and it appeared that Eades was elected. He followed the tracks again.

It was nearly noon when he found the buckboard. Dr. Martin pulled up when he saw Eades coming and when Eades arrived all three land seekers were grinning. They

had seen an antelope and turned off, hoping to see more. This was not the way to Charco creek, was it?

"No," Eades said, "it ain't. I'm goin' to town and if you want, I'll show you."

"Do you have time?" the doctor asked.

"All there is," Eades assured. "I quit back there a while ago. Come on."

He rode beside the buckboard, his pack horse leading good and requiring no attention. No one mentioned Eades' job or why he had quit it. They talked antelope hunting for a while and then there were more questions for Eades to answer. This was no farming country, Eades stated. There were too many dry years—the winters were too hard. Dr. Martin pointed to the hub-deep grama and said that any country growing grass like that was surely good for wheat. After a time they came to Charco creek.

Eades might have left the party then, but he did not. Surveyors had been working, the country was full of stakes, and Eades helped locate a section corner and mark it on the doctor's map. One man liked a claim on a shelly knoll because the view was good. Eades steered him away from that. He showed another a patch of alkali and warned against it. Eades worked as hard as any of the three, got as excited, and was as pleased as they were when, finally, their claims were chosen. It was late when they finished and later still when they reached the livery barn in Salamanca.

"I can't begin to say how grateful we are," Dr. Martin told Eades. "You've been a lifesaver and we'd like to pay you for your trouble."

"You don't owe me a thing," Eades answered, his voice stiff.

The doctor saw he had offended and tried to smooth it over. "Will you have supper with us, then?" he asked.

Eades was about to refuse for he was angry. Then he hesitated. The offer of money, like all the rest, came from ignorance.

"Sure," Eades agreed. "I'd like to."

That night Eades slept in the Salamanca Hotel—brand new but with the green lumber already warping—and in the morning joined his friends again. Eades had promised to help them file, but when he arrived at the U. S. commissioner's office he found seven men waiting instead of three. Eades met the strangers and Dr. Martin took him aside. These men, the doctor said, were good people and he wanted Eades to locate them on claims. He would not be content unless Eades agreed.

"They'll pay you twenty-five dollars each," Dr. Martin said. "Now, wait! Don't go off half-cocked! Your time and what you know are worth that. You'll see they get good land and you've got to take the job. Will you? As a favor to me?"

Eades did not answer for a moment but looked at the doctor. Dr. Martin was very much in earnest.

"Well—" Eades said. "Well, Doc—"

That was Eades Druerson's beginning in the land locator business.

FOLKS who have never seen a land rush don't realize what one is. They talk about "doing a land office business," but they just don't know. When the boom hit Salamanca, it was like a barrel rolling downhill, going faster and faster. The railroad ran excursions twice a month and Salamanca was the first stop in New Mexico Territory. Land seekers came pouring off the trains, eager to put up their money and make their bets with the government.

"Hey!" they said when they saw someone they had known back home. "Hey there! What are you doing away out here?"

"Bettin' Uncle Sam sixteen-seventy-five that I can make it." Nine times out of ten the answer was the same. "What are you doing?"

That was how the land seekers figured. The fees for filing and proving up, the money for improvements, the time spent on the claim and all the work and worry were just a bet against one-hundred and sixty acres of government land. The land seekers believed the odds were good and that the stake was worth the gamble. They had land fever and they came arunning.

Like Salamanca, Eades Druerson was caught by the boom. He located Dr. Martin's friends and they sent others to him until things piled up like wet snow on a sheepherder's tent. Eades was uneasy at first; he constantly expected to see a face he knew, but none appeared, so he relaxed a bit. For a time he stayed at the hotel and kept his horses in the livery barn, but

presently he changed. The horses were expensive; the barn man made an offer and Eades took it. The hotel was noisy and the rates were high; Eades moved to a boarding house.

Two sisters, Miss Myrtle and Miss Sarah Blanchard, ran the boarding house, alternating between it and adjoining claims they had filed on. They liked Eades and he cottoned to them, but moving to the boarding house entailed another change: Miss Myrtle's and Miss Sarah's had no lobby where Eades could meet customers, so he rented an office.

It was just a frame shack across from the drugstore where the U. S. commissioner kept shop, but Eades was proud of it. He moved in a table and some chairs, hung a big land map on the wall, and had a sign painted to go over the door.

"You're a plutocrat, Eades," Dr. Martin accused when he saw the sign. "You make more money than I do in my practice. I think I'll quit and start locating land."

"Fly at it, Doc," Eades said, looking at his sign.

E. DRUERSON, the sign read. LAND LOCATOR. There were three other land locators in Salamanca, but none with Eades's reputation among the land seekers. There was money in Eades's pocket, good clothes covered him; there were shopmade boots on his feet, he had friends. He had everything a man could need or want only. . . . There was always an "only" with Eades Druerson.

It was April when Eades moved to his office and the land boom was going good. There were a lot of new buildings in Salamanca and more were building. All kinds of people came to the town and most of them were good. But there were a few who lived off the land seekers and some of the land seekers themselves went pretty Western, thinking that living in the Territory entitled them to be wild and woolly. Salamanca was not incorporated and had no local law; the business men got together, subscribed a sum, hired Frank Larry, and had him appointed deputy sheriff.

Eades had heard from men he had worked with on the Tramparos outfit that things had changed out there. Hern was throwing his weight around—there was a whole new crew, and Larry was dissatisfied. He had heard, too, that Larry was being considered for the job in Salamanca, but Eades had no idea that Larry would take it. Yet there he was, strolling along Salamanca's streets, an inconspicuous deputy sheriff's star pinned on his vest.

"Hello, Druerson," Frank Larry said when they met.

"How are you, Mr. Larry?" Eades answered.

Things cooled off in Salamanca after Frank Larry took over. A few men unobtrusively left town. Two others, prime trouble makers both, had the line-backed hell beat out of them and were carted off to jail in Tucumcari. Salamanca became no Sunday school—there was still drinking and open gambling—but the petty thievery, the fights and hell raising, stopped short.

Larry had an unvarying formula. "You're out of line," he told the would-be bad ones. "Quit it or leave town." He made a lot of believers.

THERE was, of course, no city hall in Salamanca and for a headquarters Frank Larry chose the Gem Saloon. Ben Saltmount, who owned the place, was an old-timer and as the Gem stayed open night and day, it was handy. For a second hangout Larry picked Eades Druerson's office. When Eades was in town and not out showing claims, Larry usually came around and stayed while he smoked a cigar. He never talked much, and sometimes not at all, but he made Eades nervous. Eades wished that Larry would find another place to loaf.

It seemed to Eades he had a lot of worries. Homesteaders, people Eades had located, were constantly coming to him for advice, and when the immigrant cars came in—Eades counted eleven immigrant cars on the siding at one time—there was sure to be a customer who needed help. Dr. Martin said they used Eades and that he was not paid to nurse them, but Eades figured different.

In May, Miss Myrtle and Miss Sarah added to Eades' load. Their brother's children, Jane and Otis Blanchard, were coming to Salamanca to take claims, and Eades must look after them, show them the best claims available, help them file, take care of them, and on and on until Eades wished the sisters would shut up and the Blanchards stay at home.

"Sure," Eades promised, "I'll take them out and show them around. I'll help them all I can."

Excursion trains came every other Tuesday and in the morning on the third Tuesday in May, Eades hired a livery rig and took Miss Myrtle and Miss Sarah to the depot. The train got in at ten o'clock, only an hour late, and people got off. First Miss Myrtle squealed and made a dash, and then Miss Sarah. Eades waited by the surrey and in a little while his landladies returned with Jane and Otis.

The girl was tall, almost as tall as Eades, and around twenty-five, he judged. Her hair was dark brown—chestnut, Eades thought—as were her eyes. She had a wide, firm mouth, high cheekbones and rounded chin. Every feature was definite and she was almost plain.

Otis was a younger copy of his sister but without her sharp definition and maturity.

"And this is Mr. Druerson," Miss Sarah said. "He's going to look after you and see that you get good claims."

Eades loaded his landladies and their niece and nephew into the surrey and drove them home, while Sarah and Miss Myrtle babbled happily. He carried in Jane's grip, returned the rig to the livery and went to his office. For the balance of the day he talked to land seekers, arranging a trip. That night at the supper table, he spoke to Jane and Otis Blanchard.

"I'm taking some land seekers out tomorrow," Eades said. "We'll be back Thursday night. Most of the good land close to town is filed on so we have to go out quite a ways. There's room for you if you want to go."

"Sure we do," Otis answered. "That's what we came out for, isn't it, Jane?"

Jane nodded, looking at Eades. "We'd like to go," she said. "Thank you, Mr. Druerson."

At six o'clock on Wednesday morning, Eades loaded eleven land seekers in an open hack drawn by a four-horse team. Jane Blanchard sat beside Eades and as they rolled along he pointed out the country and talked about it. He had devised a system for such trips—he carried land maps with him and he laid things on the line. He said, frankly, that the country was good for cattle but he did not know what else. There had been no farming in this upland; it had not been tried. There were hard winters and dry years. The water table was generally deep and it cost money to drill a well.

"There's lots of disadvantages," Eades said, "and you'll take a chance if you file. Most of this—" Eades's gesture indicated the land about them—"is already taken. Pretty soon we'll get to some that ain't."

They passed by shacks and men who were plowing; they came to straggling fences built with a single wire. They entered open prairie. Eades showed them claims. Occasionally, when one of his passengers indicated interest, he got out a map and marked it. At noon they ate a lunch and, as evening came, they reached the Cadys'.

Eades liked the Cadys. Old Tom Cady and his three big sons had filed on a section, built one good-sized house and three shacks. In Eades's estimation the Cadys were fine folks and he stopped there when he could. Old Tom welcomed Eades and Mrs. Cady waved from the kitchen door; then, seeing Jane, came out to take her into the house. Eades's passengers unloaded; Eades unhitched and fed his horses, washed, and found supper ready.

After supper Otis Blanchard suggested that they play cards and worked up a game of pitch. Some of the men talked to Tom Cady and his sons, asking them questions, and Eades loafed beside the hack. He was leaning against a wheel, smoking, when Jane Blanchard joined him.

"These people," she said abruptly. "They're fine, aren't they? Mrs. Cady hasn't a thing to do with, but she doesn't seem to mind."

"That's right," Eades agreed. "These folks are all right. The dollar you'll give them for your meals and bed will help considerable."

The sun had gone down and over in the west sky was gaudy as a poster. There was a little wind, gentle as a child's fingers.

"Why did you talk the way you did this morning?" Jane asked. "Don't you believe in this country?"

"For some things, yes."

"And for others, no." There was hostility in the girl's voice. "Do you have a claim?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because," Eades said, "I'm a cowman. You can't run cattle on a quarter section."

"You don't believe that people can live here," the girl accused. "You think they'll lose everything they put into a claim."

Anger rose in Eades. "Most of them will," he said. "There'll be a few who make it. I tell them what this country's like. Nobody asked them to come out here, none of these land seekers."

"They have a dream." Jane Blanchard's voice was soft. "They think about being independent and owning land. I don't think you're very honest, Mr. Druerson."

"Me?" Eades was astonished. "What do you mean, I'm not honest?"

"I mean, I could never do a thing I didn't believe in," Jane answered. "Good night."

WHEN she was gone, Eades lingered by the hack, smoking a cigarette. Finished, he walked over to the shack where the card game was in progress. They were betting a little, Eades saw. Otis Blanchard had a pile of change and his eyes were bright with excitement. Kind of a gambler, that boy; he got a kick out of it, particularly out of winning. Eades watched a while and then suggested that everyone turn in. There would be an early start, he said.

In the morning Eades' party left the Cadys, heading back to Salamanca by a different route. Again claims were examined and marked on Eades' maps. In Salamanca the party separated. Only two of the land seekers had made up their minds; the others wanted to think things over. Eades took the two men to the U. S. commissioner's, furnished descriptions of the claims they wanted, helped them file, and was paid.

Leaving the commissioner's, he went to the Gem. The Gem was doing a good business, what with local people and new ones from the excursion train. Sipping his drink, Eades looked along the bar and a man turned to face him. Eades put down his glass. The man was Marvin Summers and when Eades had last seen him he had been a prison guard at McAlester. Eades was certain, but wanted to make doubly sure.

"Who is the big fellow, Ben?" Eades asked Ben Saltmount behind the bar.

"Name's Summers," Saltmount answered. "Claims to be lookin' for a homestead, but he was sittin' in the poker game last night and doin' all right. Speakin' of poker, Doc Martin was in and said he wanted action. You comin' down?"

Eades looked at Marvin Summers who was watching him. There was something going on in Summers' mind; his eyes showed it. *He thinks he knows me,* Eades thought, *but he's not sure.*

"I guess not, Ben," he answered. "Thanks, just the same."

In his room at the boarding house Eades sat down and stared at the wall. He did not move for a long time. McAlester's high walls were all about him. He thought about the walls and about the time in solitary, spent there because of Summers; he could almost hear the cell doors close, the shuffle of feet in the corridors, and the whispering. Miss Sarah called Eades to supper and Eades answered that he wouldn't eat. Miss Sarah was alarmed and full of questions but finally went away. Eades heard the stir of the boarding house at mealtime but did not move.

Dark came on and Eades struck a match and touched it to his lamp wick. He pulled his war sack out from under the bed and began to pack. He took shirts from a bureau drawer and lifted out a gun, dark and heavy, and put it on the bed. The old things had caught up with Eades Druerson and it was time to go.

"Eades!" Miss Sarah was outside the door. "Did you see Otis before you came from town? He wasn't here for supper and Jane's worried."

Eades picked up the gun, hesitated an instant, then shoved it out of sight under his belt. He opened the door. Miss Sarah and Jane were in the hall.

"I didn't see him," Eades answered. "You say he's not been here?"

"Not since you came back to town." Miss Sarah showed her concern. "It's after ten o'clock and he has all their money, over five hundred dollars. You've got to find him, Eades!"

Again Eades hesitated, looking from Miss Sarah to the girl. Jane's hands were out in a little, pleading gesture.

"All right." Eades was a man picking

up a load. "Don't worry. I'll find him."

Six saloons and a pool hall in Salamanca; everything else was closed after ten o'clock. Otis Blanchard was not in the pool hall nor the Exchange nor the Blue Ribbon. The Gem was quiet and the bartender nodded when Eades came in. Eades went on back. The door to the card room was ajar and light seeped out. Eades opened the door wider and went in.

Seven men sat around the table—Dr. Martin, Ben Saltmount, Frank Larry, Otis Blanchard, Summers, and two others. The rack for chips was beside Summers, who was banking. Dr. Martin smiled at Eades. Ben Saltmount looked up from his cards.

"Dang it," he complained, "you told me you wasn't comin' down and I didn't save a place. We're full handed."

"I don't want to play," Eades said. "Your sister wants you, Blanchard."

"Tell her I'll be home when I get ready." Blanchard's eyes were bright and beads of sweat stood out on his forehead. "I can't quit. I'm loser."

"She wants you now." Eades's voice was hard. "Cash in and come on."

"I won't!" The words were strong but Blanchard's eyes wavered.

"That's tellin' him, kid. You ain't no short sport. Stick around." That was Summers and Eades turned to confront the man.

"You talk too much," Eades said levelly. "Shut up and cash him in."

Recognition flashed in Summers's eyes and he started up out of his chair. His coat swung open, showing a gun in a shoulder holster.

"By jacks, I know you now!" Triumph in Summers's voice. "I thought I did! You're a damned ex-convict out of McAlester. Your name's—"

Eades hit him. The gun from Eades's waistband swung across and smashed into Summers's face, knocking the man back and down. Summers sprawled unconscious on the floor, arms outthrown, eyes rolled back, his breathing rasping and blood beginning to run.

Ben Saltmount moved and Eades's gun swung to cover him.

"Sit still!"

Eades moved along the wall, pressing his shoulders against it until he was behind Otis Blanchard. His free hand reached out, caught Blanchard's shoulder and pulled him up out of his chair.

"Cash the kid in!" Eades ordered.

"He lost two stacks," Frank Larry's drawl was deliberate as he gathered Otis Blanchard's chips. "A hundred dollars. You want that, too?"

"Just what was in front of him," Eades said.

Larry pushed the chips across the table. Dr. Martin took them, counted money from the bank and held it out.

"Here," he said.

Mechanically Otis Blanchard took the little sheaf of bills. He looked at Summers, bleeding on the floor, and his shoulders shook. Eades had transferred his grip to Blanchard's arm. He pulled the man toward the back door, closed only by a screen, through it and out into the night. The screen door banged and Eades heard Larry's drawl.

"Take it easy, Ben. You didn't lose a dime."

IN FRONT of Miss Myrtle's and Miss Sarah's, Eades stopped and faced Otis Blanchard. In the dim starlight he could see Blanchard's drawn face and wide eyes. Eades took a roll of money from his pocket, peeled off five bills and thrust them into Blanchard's hand.

"There's a hundred dollars," Eades said. "Now, listen! You saw what happened tonight—don't you forget it! Tomorrow you take your tickets to the depot and have 'em validated. You and your sister go back home. You hear me? Go home!"

"I—" Otis began.

"You don't belong here!" Eades interrupted, his voice fierce. "You ain't the kind. And your sister thinks I ain't honest. Go in there now and don't forget what I told you. You go home!"

He gave the man a push, watched him open the boarding house door and, when it closed, Eades turned to walk back down the street. Reaching the office he unlocked, went in and sat behind the table. The gun pressed uncomfortably against his belly and he removed it, placing it on the table. The door was open, a lighter oblong of darkness. Eades watched the door.

Number three, the mail train, ran. Eades heard the faint roar and the wail of the

whistle. That meant that it was midnight. Sometime after Number Three, a freight came to a clanking halt, the engine panting. The freight stayed in town—Eades did not know how long—and then the engineer whistled off, the slack went out with a rumble, and the freight was gone. Lights began to come, slowly, slowly, and when the light was full, a wagon passed by outside and Eades heard a man speak to another.

He looked at his watch. It was half past five.

"Can I come in?" Frank Larry spoke from beyond the door.

"Come in," Eades said.

Larry entered. He paced across the little room, chose a chair and sat down heavily, a middle-aged man who was tired. He let his belly sag and brushed a hand across his gray mustache.

"Well?" Eades demanded.

"I looked up at the boarding house," Larry said, "but you'd never went there and Miss Myrtle and Miss Sarah are upset. Then I went to the depot an' the livery barn but you hadn't been there either, so I came here. What's the idea?"

"I didn't want a mess," Eades answered. "No need of those folks knowing. Go ahead, Larry. I committed assault, didn't I?"

"You were pretty rough," Larry agreed. "No need of it, either. Did you think the rest of us would jump you?"

"I didn't think," Eades answered honestly. "He was a guard in McAlester and he gave me a bad time. I was in solitary once on account of him. He started up and I saw his gun, so I hit him. And when Ben moved, I didn't know what he meant to do."

"McAlester, huh?" Larry folded big-knuckled hands and rested them on the table. "Why did they send you up?"

"Because," Eades said, "I tried to kill a man. He was a dirty dog and there was a girl. . . . Hell, you don't care about that. I got sentenced for assault with intent to kill. Ain't that enough? Are you goin' to get a warrant?"

"Why, now—" Larry considered his hands—"I hadn't figured on a warrant."

"You just figured to run me out of town." Eades' voice was bitter. "That's all right—I wouldn't stay anyhow. I've had this happen before; that's why I changed my name and moved. I thought I could dodge it. I—"

"I wish you'd let me talk a minute." Frank Larry was a little petulant. "That fellow you hit—Summers—was a damned tinhorn gambler and he'd been cheatin'. Ben Saltmount and me looked through the deck and found some cards crimped. After Doc Martin fixed him up, I took him down and put him on a freight. I think he'll keep on goin'. You ain't wanted, are you? You ain't broke parole or nothin'?"

"No." Eades shook his head. "But I—"

"But you don't want to stay here." Larry got up, went over to the land map and turned to face Eades again. "Maybe that's best. You could count on me and Ben and Doc, but those other two might give up head and there'd be talk. Look here." One heavy finger touched the map and Eades's eyes followed it. "Right here," Frank Larry said, "is where Canyon Largo comes out. You could file on a claim in the mouth. It's away hell and gone from anywheres. Nobody would bother you and you could finish up your bridle."

"My bridle?" Eades did not understand.

"The one you're braidin'. There was a small curve at the corners of Larry's lips under his gray mustache. "Lots of men make them things, Druerson. I've seen 'em made in linecamps and around bunkhouses, and I've seen 'em made in jails. I made one once, in McAlester, the same as you did." He paused, glaring at Eades from beneath bushy eyebrows. "That ain't generally known," Frank Larry concluded.

SILENCE grew and spread in the little office. Eades understood a great many things. He knew why he had gone to Carlitos camp and why Larry used the office for a hangout. Abruptly the older man spoke again.

"Hern's leavin'," he said. "The company is selling out and they want me to gather the cattle. I'm goin' to do it. I'll work that Canyon Largo country but we won't get 'em all. I could use a man to stay there and pick up remnants. I'd pay you for it and that would see you through till you'd proved up. Then you could run some cows back in them breaks."

"I'll have to tell my name," Eades said, thoughtfully. "I don't believe—"

"Pshaw!" A gesture of one big hand brushed the objection aside. "Why? Around here your name is Druerson. I'd swear to it and so would Doc Martin and Ben Saltmount. You'd better think it over."

Eades did not answer. He was looking at the table. Larry could almost hear Eades's wheels go around. He watched Eades a moment, then quietly crossed the office and stepped out. Beyond the door he paused, looking up and down the street. The chimney of the Bon Ton restaurant was smoking and a girl came around the corner, walking rapidly.

Jane Blanchard. She stopped, confronting Larry.

"I'm looking for Mr. Druerson," Jane said. "He gave Otis some money and I'm going to give it back."

"Last night," Frank Larry drawled, "when I was to Miss Myrtle's and Miss Sarah's, I heard that you were goin' home. Ain't that right?"

"I'm not going." Jane's chin came up defiantly. "Otis is going home but I'm going to stay and take a claim."

"I see." Larry nodded. "Yeah. Then Druerson's your man. He's right inside."

He watched the girl enter the office, saw the door close, and leaned one heavy shoulder against the building, waiting. After perhaps five minutes, entirely unashamed, Frank Larry looked through a window. Eades and the girl were sitting by the table and Eades was talking.

He's tellin' her about it, Frank Larry thought. *He's honest and he's tellin' her the truth. Maybe she'll understand. If she doesn't, she'll be out in a minute.* He turned from the window and relaxed, waiting again. Jane Blanchard did not come out.

Another five minutes passed, then ten. Another look through the window. Eades and the girl had their backs turned—they were standing, and Eades was pointing to something on the map. Canyon Largo, perhaps. Jane nodded in agreement and looked up at Eades.

Frank Larry turned away, settled his vest and gave his pants a hitch. Across the street the U. S. commissioner was sweeping rubbish out of the drugstore door. Frank Larry nodded to the commissioner, and then, smiling a little to himself, walked on down the street to get his morning coffee.

POINT OF HONOR

At break of dawn we principals shall meet
Below the giant oaks that fringe the river,
Sided by seconds silent and discreet;
And from the first exploratory quiver
Of weapon-tips (of arms I had my choice,
Being in this affair the challenged party)
'Twill be a bout to make the just rejoice!
I deemed him an opinionated smarty,
A wiseacre whose wits had gone awry,
And so implied; which straightway stirred his mettle
Until he called me out . . . Thus Doc and I
Today with long, lithe, lethal toys will settle
Which is more efficacious in the kill—
A Silver Doctor or a Ginger Quill!

—By Harold Willard Gleason

DEVIL AND THE

The deathless saga of the ping-happy spit kit whose sub-chasing knew no hits, no runs—and no terrors!

"SPLATTERAFT" SMITH, sonarman third class, stormed into the crew's bunk room of the ship in which he served and demanded of his shipmates, "What the hell are they trying to do, make a battleship out of this spit kit?"

The vessel referred to in this deprecating manner was *PC-615,* displacement two hundred eighty tons, length one hundred

Suddenly a gigantic, evil-looking, monstrous thing heaved up from the depths. . . .

SPIT KIT

By DAN GALLERY

fifty feet, full wartime complement thirty-eight men. "They" would have a hard time making a battleship out of her.

"Knock off beating your gums, Splatteraft," advised Itchy Gibbs, gunner's mate third class, "We're having bad enough trouble trying to make a PC boat out of her. What's griping you now?"

Splatteraft pulled off a non-regulation undershirt and announced, "You can't wear these things topside anymore, at least not while we're alongside this dock where that gimlet eyed old buzzard up on Pier Seven can see us. Since he got on the skipper's tail, this Navy is getting to be almost as bad as the Army."

The above is not of course, the proper way for petty officers to refer to an admiral,

even in the forward bunkroom of a ship in the hooligan navy. But things were often done on *PC-615* which were not strictly in accordance with established naval custom.

PC-615 was what is known in the Navy as a ragtime ship. Her crew were all reserves, and the main qualification of her skipper, Lieutenant Simpson, to command a combatant ship in wartime was five years experience as a lawyer in Omaha. He hardly knew the bow from the stern of the ship when he came aboard, and it would be stretching things a bit to say that he ran the sort of taut smart ship which Admiral Bates expected any naval ship to be—especially one that was tied up to a dock in his naval base, clearly visible from the windows of his office.

Lieutenant Simpson figured that he was in the Navy to help strike a blow for freedom, not to make parade ground sailors out of his crew of farmers and soda jerks. Although his previous maritime experience had all been acquired on the Platte River, Lieutenant Simpson had read a great deal about naval history, strategy, and tactics. He knew that the major mission of the U.S. Navy was to maintain control of the seas, and that this control was hanging in the balance in the great Battle of the Atlantic, then raging. Of course he also knew that the odds against one PC boat tipping the balance toward victory in this battle were very great. But Napoleon had said that fortune favors the brave. And one of the Principles of War laid down in the Naval War College correspondence course was the Principle of the Offensive. So, despite the odds whenever Lieutenant Simpson put to sea he took a calculated risk and threw the full two hundred eighty tons of his command into the battle with no strings—or rather no lines—attached.

The only [illegible] he was interested in was trying to s[illegible]bmarines, but so far he hadn't had much luck in that field. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say he had a great deal of luck and it was all bad. *PC-615* was known all up and down the east coast as a trigger-happy eager-beaver which was always reporting submarines where there weren't any, and alarming gulls, fish, and seamen by scattering depth charges all over the ocean.

Perhaps on account of this, there seemed to be a marked willingness on the part of every admiral commanding a naval base on the east coast to fight the Battle of the Atlantic without the help of the *PC-615*. Whenever a command to which she happened to be attached received orders to transfer a PC boat somewhere else, the *615* always was the first one they thought of. She had been booted from Boston to Newport to New York and had only recently been sent to reinforce Admiral Bates' command at Norfolk.

As you may suspect, Admiral Bates had not made a favorable impression on the crew of the *615*, and this feeling of coolness was mutual. The crew was currently sweating out a month's restriction to the ship which had been slapped on the men by Admiral Bates, very unfairly they thought. But there was something to be said on the admiral's side of the controversy too.

To tell the truth, the *PC-615* was a lubberly little bucket. When Admiral Bates sent her up to the Washington Navy Yard on some errand, she had pumped her bilges and dumped garbage overboard while tied up next to the President's yacht. This is the nautical equivalent of committing a nuisance on the White House lawn and had called forth some critical comment from very high level sources.

Then she had rammed and sunk Admiral Bates' barge, backing out of her berth at the Naval Base. And coming out of her berth head first another day, she had somehow or another gotten her stern line fouled on the rear wheel of Admiral Bates' official limousine and had dragged it off the dock and into seven fathoms of salt water. The fact that an inspector general had been seated in the car at the time and had just barely gotten out before it went over the side may perhaps have caused Admiral B. to exaggerate the importance of this last incident.

On the morning when Splatteraft and Itchy were voicing their derogatory opinion of Admiral Bates, the admiral hauled Lieutenant Simpson up on the carpet.

"Mr. Simpson," said the admiral severely. "This is the last chance for *PC-Sixfifteen*. I'm sending you out to patrol off the Virginia Capes for two weeks tomorrow. If you don't get that ship straightened out by the time you come back I'm going to send her up to Iceland for the rest of the war—and you along with her."

"Yes, sir—I mean aye-aye, sir," said the unhappy skipper.

"She looks like a honey barge instead of a man of war," continued the admiral. "I want you to get busy and put some naval discipline and snap into her."

"Aye-aye, sir. If I may say a word, sir—all of us on board are new to the Navy and have a lot to learn about many things—"

"Indeed you have," agreed the admiral. "—but I've tried to concentrate on first things first and to train my men to operate sonar, to keep the engines going, and to make the depth charges work in order to sink submarines. We just haven't had time to brush up on etiquette of the quarter deck and other things like that which the regular Navy does automatically."

"Of course there are certain things that any ship is expected to do—or not to do—automatically, whether she's regular Navy or reserve," observed the admiral with a reminiscent scowl.

Lieutenant Simpson did not care to explore that subject any further. "We are trying to do the best we can with what we've got," he said hopefully, quoting one of Fleet Admiral Kings' widely publicized remarks.

The admiral loosened up a bit. "My experience has been that a smart ship is also an efficient one. Go back and get that ship cleaned up, get your crew in uniform, get their hair cut, and make a man of war out of her. As soon as you get some discipline aboard you will find that your other problems will solve themselves."

"Aye-aye, sir," said Lieutenant Simpson dubiously.

"And another thing," said the admiral, "It's all very fine to try and sink submarines, but make sure you've got a submarine before you alarm the whole east coast about it. Don't forget we've got about a thousand PC boats in this navy. They all hear funny noises in their sound stacks but not a single one has sunk a submarine yet."

"Maybe we will be the first one, sir," said Lieutenant Simpson.

"All right, I hope so," said Admiral Bates. "That's all. Good luck."

UPON his return to the ship Lieutenant Simpson was greeted by the chief boatswain's mate.

"Captain, we've got a new draft coming aboard this afternoon from the *Missouri*."

"Good," said the skipper. "How many?"

"One man," said the chief glumly.

"Oh well. That's better than nothing."

"I'm not so sure it is," said the chief. "He will be the worst bum they've got on board, otherwise they wouldn't be transferring him, and they've got a lot of bums first class on a ship of that size."

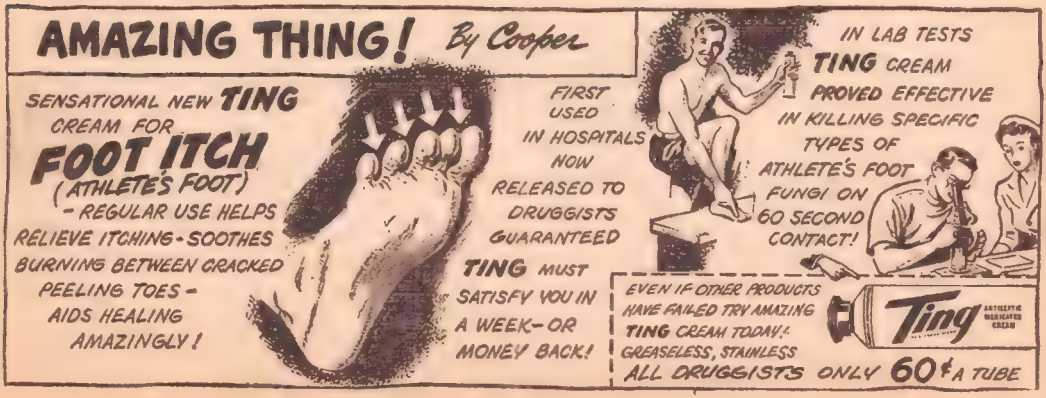
"We'll put him to work anyway," said the lieutenant. "We get underway tomorrow for a two weeks' patrol outside the Capes, and Lord help us if anything goes wrong this time."

"That's fine," said the chief. "Maybe we'll get ourselves a sub and get out of the doghouse."

"We will get out one way or another," Lieutenant Simpson replied. "But if it's the wrong way we will wind up in an igloo in Iceland."

Next day *PC-615* sailed from the Naval Base to patrol the entrance of the main ship channel thirty miles outside the Virginia Capes. This was her tenth "war cruise," but her first in this area.

On board was the new man from the


AMAZING THING! By Cooper
SENSATIONAL NEW TING CREAM FOR FOOT ITCH (ATHLETE'S FOOT)
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EVEN IF OTHER PRODUCTS HAVE FAILED TRY AMAZING TING CREAM TODAY! GREASELESS, STAINLESS
ALL DRUGGISTS ONLY 60¢ A TUBE
Ting

Missouri, one Willie Jones, seaman second class. Willie's naval career to date had included very little sea duty. He had gone from boot camp to disciplinary barracks, to retraining camp, and, after one day on the *Missouri,* had been transferred to the *615.* Splatteraft, Itchy, and other members of the crew were now explaining to Willie about life at sea, particularly life on this spit kit.

"All we do on this bucket," said Splatteraft, "is to try to sink submarines when we are at sea and to keep out of sight of Admiral Bugler Bates when we are in port."

"Isn't this an awful small boat to fight a submarine?" inquired Willie.

"You bet your life it is," said Itchy. "It's just about the smallest thing we've got that flies a commission pennant as a man of war."

"What happens if the submarine comes up and wants to fight with us?" asked Willie.

"Oh, we've got my two twenty millimeter guns," said Itchy airily, "but don't worry about that. They never come up close to the beach—too many airplanes around, and that's one thing the submarines are afraid of—airplanes. Here around Norfolk the sky is always lousy with them."

"How many submarines have you sunk so far, Mr. Smith?" inquired Willie.

"Well we haven't really sunk any yet," put in Itchy Gibbs, "but we've sure scared a lot of fish."

"It wasn't always fish," interrupted Splatteraft indignantly, "I'm certain we had a submarine at least five or six times. I could tell from the echo in my sonar gear. We just had bad luck and you missed with the depth charges."

"Bad luck, nuts," snorted Itchy. "If my depth charges go off close to a submarine she's finished. But all I can do is drop them when you guys in the sonar shack tell me to."

"Keep your shirt on, Itchy," said Splatteraft. "Even destroyers miss sometimes. This sonar gear we've got isn't very accurate and we have to guess at the dropping point. But we can't always guess wrong. If we keep trying long enough—"

"We'll keep trying as long as Lieutenant Simpson is skipper," observed one of the bystanders. "You can bank on that."

"You'll never hit a home run with your bat on your shoulder," philosophized Splatteraft. "Some day maybe we'll do everything wrong but get a sub anyway just because it's our day."

"Sure. Babe Ruth hit some homers off bad balls," said Willie Jones.

"That's right," agreed Itchy Gibbs. "Now listen, Willie, and I'll tell you about your battle station. You're going to be my helper back aft on the depth charge racks. When I give the word you just pull the handle that arms the depth charges. Then when we get to the right spot I drop 'em."

"What does it mean to arm depth charges?" asked Willie.

"That fixes them so they will explode," explained Itchy. "When you pull the safety pin, they're armed. As long as the safety pin is in they can't go off even if you hit them with a sledge hammer. After you pull the safety pin, they will fire when—"

Itchy's dissertation on depth charge firing mechanisms was interrupted by the general alarm bell, and the squawk box on the bulkhead blared, "Stand by for submarine attack—this is a drill."

"Blow me down," said Itchy, "another drill. You'd think we could at least wait till we get outside the Capes. Come on, Willie, an' I'll show you what you gotta do."

WHILE the crew of the *615* are scrambling to their battle stations, let's take a quick look around on this little naval warrior. She has just about the minimum equipment that might possibly enable her to sink a sub with a great deal of luck. She has a primitive sonar gear for locating a submarine by bouncing echoes off its hull. She has ten depth charges which can be rolled over the stern if the sonar ever guides her to the right spot to do this. She has more depth charges in her magazines but it takes about fifteen minutes to get them up and reload her racks after an attack. In case a wounded sub should surface to slug it out yard arm to yard arm, she has a main battery of two twenty millimeter guns.

The sonar is Splatteraft's pigeon. Sonar is something like radar except that it works on sound under water. You make a *ping* in the water, which goes out in a fan shaped beam, and you listen for an echoing *ping.* If there's no echo it means there is nothing there. If there is an echo, then there is something—maybe a layer of cold water,

maybe a school of fish, maybe a wreck on the bottom—maybe even a submarine. Whatever it is, the direction in which your beam is pointed when you get an echo tells you the direction of the something, and the time between *ping* and *ping* tells you its distance.

A good sonar operator can tell a lot about his target by the kind of echo he gets. A mushy echo is probably fish. A submarine gives a sharp metallic echo. Hotshots like Splatteraft can tell from the "doppler effect" whether a submarine is running toward you or away. During an attack the sonar man coaches the skipper how to steer in order to pass just ahead of the submarine, so that when the depth charges sink to the depth where they are set to explode they will be right on top of the submarine. There are lots of chances for error in this business, so when you are sure you've got a submarine target, you shoot the works and lay a large pattern of depth charges.

For drill purposes PC boats had a series of what the Navy calls "canned problems." Splatteraft would *ping* and although no echo came back he would pretend that one had, and Lieutenant Simpson would maneuver the ship accordingly. It was all laid out on a printed time schedule and run by a split second stopwatch so that the make-believe echoes came back exactly the same way that real ones would have. As you approach the imaginary submarine, the echo time gets shorter and shorter until, when you are nearly on top of it, the echo disappears—because the sonar gear "looks" ahead instead of down, so the beam finally goes over the top of the submerged sub and produces no echo. By this time you should have the submarine's course and speed figured out, so you adjust your own course to pass just ahead of her, and when you think you have reached the dropping point you toss a little hand grenade over the side to represent your depth charge pattern.

PC-615 ran through five canned problems that morning, one right after the other, making what Lieutenant Simpson, Splatteraft, and Itchy all estimated would have been five sure kills if there had been a real submarine there. All this time the ship was proceeding in the general direction of Cape Henry but not paying too much attention to exactly where she was going. There is plenty of water all around there for a shallow draft craft, and so Lieutenant Simpson concentrated on making good attacks and steered whatever courses Splatteraft gave him.

On the sixth dry run something happened that wasn't in the script of the canned problem. Splatteraft suddenly yelled, "Hey—there's something funny here. . . . *I'm getting a real echo* . . . there it is again . . . dead ahead four hundred yards!"

We won't say that Lieutenant Simpson didn't bat an eye. He batted them both. But grabbing hold of the rail he said, "Steady as you go—all engines ahead full speed—stand by your depth charges. This is no drill—this is a real attack, fellows!"

This wasn't the first "real" attack for *PC-615,* so the crew behaved like the veterans they were. Itchy gave Willie Jones the order to pull the safety pins from the depth charges, and stood by at the release handles for the word from the bridge to drop.

Ping, went the sonar gear.

Ping, the echo came back.

"Mister Itchy," said Willie Jones in an awed voice, "are them fuses burning now?"

"Naw," said Itchy. "Not yet. Not till after I pull the release and—"

Ping, went Splatteraft's sonar.

Ping, came the answer.

"One hundred yards, sir," sang out Splatteraft. "Have lost the echo sir—thirty seconds to go!"

"Come right five degrees," said the skipper. "Are you all ready aft?"

"Ready aft!" yelled Itchy.

"Hold it," cried Splatteraft. "I've got the echo again—five hundred yards on port bow thirty degrees."

"How the hell could it jump out there all of a sudden?" growled the skipper. "What have you got—a school of fish? Replace safety pins."

"This ain't fish—it's a sharp metallic echo . . . four hundred yards, sir, closing down doppler. . . . It sounds just like a submarine, sir."

A great naval commander must adjust himself to unexpected moves by the enemy and be prepared quickly to revise his plan of campaign to fit unforeseen developments in the heat of battle.

"Left twenty degrees rudder," shouted Lieutenant Simpson. *Ping,* went the sonar. *Ping,* came the answer.

"Two hundred yards, sir," yelled Splatteraft.

"Geez—this must be one of those new high speed submarines we've been hearing about," said Itchy nervously.

"Echo disappeared, sir—twenty-seven seconds to go," yelled Splatteraft.

The well-drilled crew of *PC-615* again went through the routine of getting ready to drop—and the result was exactly the same as before. Fifteen seconds before dropping time Splatteraft picked up another echo this time on the starboard bow.

"What the hell are you doing with that sonar?" yelled the lieutenant. "I think you're crazy—no submarine can squirm around like that."

Ping . . . Ping.

"It's a good solid metallic echo, sir," wailed Splatteraft desperately. "I can't help it, sir. . . . Five hundred yards, sir . . . fifteen degrees to starboard. . . . It's a submarine, sir, I'm sure of it. . . ." *Ping . . . ping.*

The same strange business kept repeating itself over and over. *PC-615* was in the middle of its fifth "firing" run, with depth charges armed and ready to drop when the signalman on the bridge noticed a high powered searchlight on Cape Henry blinking frantically at them.

Ping, went the sonar. "Thirty-five seconds to go!" yelled Splatteraft.

"Stand by to fire," ordered Lieutenant Simpson, as the signalman began spelling out the message from the beach.

"Y-O-U A-R-E I-N T-H-E M-I-D-D-L-E O-F T-H-E M-I-N-E F-I-E-L-D."

"Captain—" yelled the frantic signalman. "Don't drop those charges—hold everything—cease firing!"

PC-615 got the hell out of that mine field as fast as she could, with her tail between her legs. Fortunately the mines were planted too deep to be fired by a shallow draft ship like a PC boat. But if she had ever turned loose those depth charges, she would have blown herself sky high. Even when a PC boat is making full speed, her own depth charges, with only one hundred and fifty pounds of TNT in them, shake her up pretty badly. One of those huge coastal mines with two thousand pounds of TNT in it would have atomized her.

"This settles it," groaned the skipper as the ship cleared the minefield. "When old Bates hears about this, we will be on our way to Iceland."

Next day *PC-615* was patrolling off the seaward end of the swept channel leading into Chespeake Bay, awaiting the arrival of a large convoy. Just coming over the horizon was the heavy cruiser, *Salem,* flying a three-star admiral's flag, with four destroyer escorts.

Naturally *PC-615* was *pinging* busily away, on the alert to pounce on any Nazi U-boat that threatened this crucial bottleneck to the strategic Chesapeake Bay area. Once again Splatteraft picked up a tell-tale echo and the alarm rang through the ship.

"Hold your hats, kids, here we go again," said Itchy as the crew tumbled out of the bunk room and manned battle stations.

"Six hundred yards to go," yelled Splatteraft. "Strong metallic echo . . . down doppler . . . closing rapidly."

"Stand by to fire full depth charge pattern," ordered Lieutenant Simpson resolutely.

Ping, went the sonar . . . *ping,* came the echo.

"Four hundred yards to go," yelled Splatteraft. . . . "this is it, sir—I'm sure of it."

"Pull safety pins," ordered Itchy back at the depth charge racks. And Willie pulled them.

Ping, went the sonar . . . *ping.*

"Two hundred yards, sir . . . bearing steady . . this is a good run."

Ping. . . .

"Have lost echo," yelled Splatteraft. "Twenty-five seconds to go. By gosh we've got one this time, sir. I hear propeller noises. . . ten seconds . . . five seconds. . Stand by . . fire!"

Back aft Itchy jerked both release handles and the depth charges rolled down the tracks and tumbled overboard in succession, laying a line of ashcans across the estimated track of the submarine—or of whatever it was that Splatteraft had been *pinging* on. Everybody on *PC-615* leaned over the rail and craned their necks aft.

In a few seconds there was a rippling series of shattering explosions and huge plumes of water geysered up out of the ocean astern of them.

"Keep a sharp look out for oil or wreckage. Stand by to rescue survivors," came the cool command from the bridge. The

order was really unnecessary. The crew had been through all this time and time again. They knew what to do.

Then it happened. No oil—no debris—no survivors—but suddenly a gigantic, evil-looking, monstrous thing heaved itself up from the depths, white water pouring off its sides only one hundred yards from the tiny PC boat. On the side of its conning tower was the legend *U-1620*, and on its deck were two deadly five-inch guns. It looked like a demon from the depths of hell.

"Omigawd," moaned the helmsman of *PC-615*. "Look what we've done now!"

This was a shocking development, worse even than dragging the admiral's car off the dock. It was like a small boy hunting rabbits who is suddenly confronted by a hungry mother bear.

"I swear she's bigger than the *Missouri*," gasped Willie Jones in an awed voice, "but I'm afraid she's going to get away."

"The only thing I'm afraid of is that she ain't," moaned Itchy. "Please go back down, mister—we didn't mean no harm."

PC-615 had shot her wad. It would take her at least fifteen minutes to reload those depth charge racks. Meantime, the U-boat, if the Nazis were so minded, could probably hoist her aboard and take the whole kit and kaboodle of them back to Hitler.

The only really smart thing to do in these circumstances was to submerge. PC boats aren't designed to do that, but as soon as those hatches on the sub popped open and the Nazis could get at the five-inch guns, the *PC-615* would probably submerge very quickly.

"That was a submarine for sure that time, Lieutenant," said Splatteraft confidently as he emerged from the sonar shack. Then as he gazed ahead: "Oh migawd!"

It would be inaccurate to say that panic reigned on the *PC-615* at this point. But we must admit that no cheers went up. The submarine's hatches hadn't popped open yet, but if the Nazis didn't want to use their guns, they had dozens of torpedoes that could blow even a battleship wide open.

Torpedoes. . . . On the bridge of *PC-615* a scene from naval history flashed through Lieutenant Simpson's mind. . . . Admiral Farragut at the Battle of Mobile Bay, on the bridge of his ship, saying, "*Damn the torpedoes—go ahead.*"

"Left full rudder—all engines ahead full speed—stand by to ram!" yelled Lieutenant Simpson. So around came the *PC-615* and headed for the submarine. This was a desperate chance but at least it fitted in with several of the nine Principles of War—Offensive, Surprise, Mobility, Economy of Force—and how on the latter! This was just about all that anybody could do.

Not quite all. Admiral Farragut had also said, "*The best defense against the enemy is the well directed fire of your own guns.*" Of course twenty millimeter stuff would bounce off that submarine like hail off a tin roof, but—

"Get those guns going," yelled Lieutenant Simpson. "Commence firing—let go with both barrels."

Up to this point in the battle, Lady Luck had remained neutral. True, it was bad luck for *PC-615* that the depth charge pattern had missed so far. But on the other hand, it was now obvious that the surfacing of the submarine so close to the coast had been accidental, and she was getting back under again as fast as she could.

NOW, Lady Luck definitely cast her lot with our plucky little spit kit. In fact she cast it on the forecastle of the *615* like a ton of brick.

The last order issued by Captain Simpson reached the chief boatswain's mate up in the bow in somewhat garbled form. Captain Simpson had yelled, "Let go with both barrels." The chief thought he had said, "Let go both anchors."

In the heat of a battle such as this one you don't question any orders from the bridge, no matter how screwy they may seem, so the chief knocked the shackles off the pelican hooks and down went the anchors. The chain rattled out and snapped to a stop at the bitter end just as the U-boat crash-dived, not more than fifty yards ahead of the oncoming PC boat. Lady Luck had seen to it that the water was deep here, and the anchor cables didn't quite reach the bottom. So *PC-615* plowed through the water at fifteen knots toward the spot where the U-boat just disappeared, with her anchors suspended under her like two huge grappling hooks. In a few seconds heavy vibration of the chains showed that they were being dragged across a sub-

merged object. Then the anchors crashed into the outer hull of the U-boat, their flukes dug into the thin plates and *PC-615* was brought to an abrupt halt like a puppy dog at the end of his leash. The U-boat's tough pressure hull was still undamaged, but she was now securely gigged. The PC boat had a wild bull by the tail and couldn't let go.

While this was going on, the attention of all hands had been directed forward. Now Lady Luck stole aft and turned Willie Jones's head for half a second toward the stern. What he saw made his hair stand on end and nearly caused him to jump overboard.

The depth charges were *not* all gone. The last one had jammed in the rack, there it hung at the end of the track—and the safety pin was out!

Willie's knowledge of naval underwater ordnance was rather sketchy. He knew nothing about hydrostatic firing mechanisms. He thought depth charges were fired by a time fuse which started burning when the charges began rolling down the track, and in that case the one back aft there on the stern was due to go off any minute. Overdue!

Willie didn't mess around asking anybody what to do or fooling with any red tape. As he said later, he "—seen his duty and done it." He bounded aft and gave that depth charge a hell of a shove, busting it loose and rolling it overboard.

Whenever you drop depth charges you should always have pretty good speed on your ship so you will be well clear of the area before they blow up. But in this case the ship was dead in the water having just been snubbed up short by her anchors digging into the huge submarine.

Willie's depth charge sank to its set depth of ninety feet and was just about to settle on the deck of the submarine ninety-five feet below the surface when the hydrostat acted and the ashcan blew up.

It seemed that the explosion lifted the *615* clear out of the water. Actually it only lifted her a few inches. A depth charge has to be closer than ninety feet to do much more than bust all the crockery and make you feel like you've got flat feet for a week. But five feet is plenty close enough so Willie's charge blew a huge hole in the unfortunate U-boat and down she went to Davey Jones' locker.

When the victorious little PC boat hove in her chains, the port anchor was missing. But on the flukes of the starboard anchor there was a large metal plate bearing the number U-1620. As the *615* labored to clear and secure this anchor, surrounded by oil, debris and all sorts of rubbish, a message came flashing in by searchlight from the vice-admiral embarked in the approaching heavy cruiser *Salem:* "Hearty congratulations. Very well done indeed."

The admiral had seen the whole battle through a big spy glass on the flag bridge. His radio report to the chief of naval operations spared no superlatives in describing the expert handling of the *PC-615* in this battle against great odds, her brilliant tactic of using her anchors to snare the escaping enemy, and her heroic use of depth charges when she herself was grappled to her giant antagonist. The Presidential Unit Citation was approved by Admiral King before the sun went down.

As the gallant PC boat limped back into Norfolk with her aching bottom, the crew refought the battle many times.

When all other angles had been exhausted, Itchy Gibbs declared, "Willie, sometimes it pays to be dumb. But after all my explanations I don't see how anybody could possibly think that a depth charge would explode on deck—just the same you're going to get a big gold medal for thinking so."

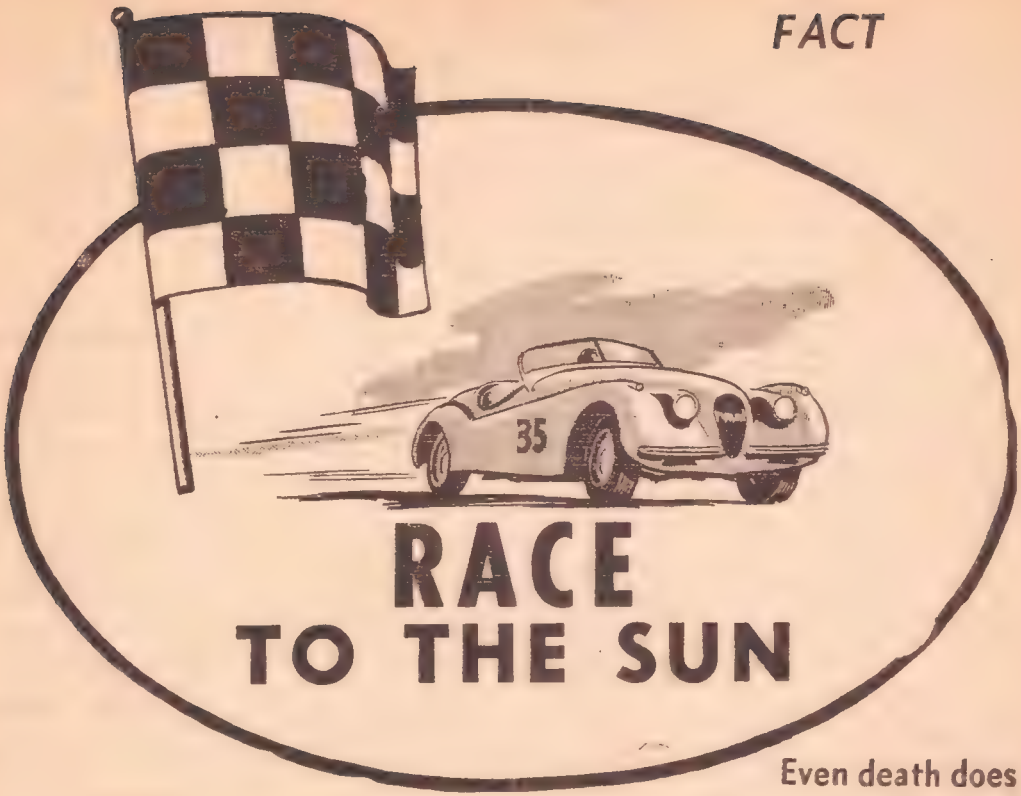
"Maybe they'll give Mr. Itchy a medal too," said Willie.

"Yeah," agreed Splatteraft, "A leather one—and a book of instructions about depth charges."

When *PC-615* came alongside the dock at the naval base, Admiral Bugler Bates was the first one up the gangway to congratulate Lieutenant Simpson. As he came aboard he noted approvingly that he was given the proper number of sideboys, in reasonably good uniform, and that the chief boatswain's mate piped him over the side in true Navy style.

"Remember what I told you, Captain," he said as he grabbed Lieutenant Simpson's hand. "Just get some naval discipline into your crew and all the other things will come automatically."

"Aye-aye, sir—thank you, sir," said Lieutenant Simpson without batting an eye. "You are absolutely right, sir."



RACE TO THE SUN

Even death does not cancel the final battle between the top drivers of Europe.

By ROLAND WILD

THE wind seemed to be blowing a white cloud of feathers into the windshield. The headlights picked out only the rough outlines of a road and snowdrifts that could hide road or ditch. The car slowed down, the driver peering through reddened eyes of weariness. He stole a glance at the clock and the speedometer, and his brain completed the calculations that had occupied him for the last sixty hours.

"Hell!" he said. "Three minutes late—"

The road straightened out ahead, and he pressed down on the gas. The big car slipped and slapped forward, the chains gripping and sliding. His eyes were closing and he felt mesmerised by the snowflakes coming at him. *Ten more hours,* he thought.

It was the end of the straight stretch. The corner ahead was a mystery, an enigma of white banks that reached to the fir trees and the ugly humps of rocks. He took his foot off the gas and the car dug into the snow and he was rounding the bend.

"Look out! They've crashed!"

Half across the road, the sedan lay at a crazy angle, front wheels in the ditch. The lights were out. A woman bundled up in a greatcoat was standing in the snow with a flashlight, tearing at the door. The driver slammed a foot on the brake, and the car slid alongside as he changed to low gear.

Through the window he yelled, "Okay?"

The woman on the road waved the flashlight, and her voice came through the storm.

"No!" she shouted. "But go ahead! Good luck!"

He pressed down on the gas again and the car scraped past the wreck and accelerated wildly up the hill. "Five minutes late," he said. "But that's one more out—"

The callous driver was Sidney Allard, a competitor in a contest that knows no quarter. The lady he abandoned on the roadside was his wife, another competitor. They were rivals in this year's Monte Carlo Rally, the annual free-for-all that is today considered the world's toughest endurance test for car and driver. Sidney Allard went on to win the *Grand Prix* against 328 competitors from eighteen countries, and his wife limped into Monte Carlo to see him receive the prize.

A feature of the forty-year-old contest is the casual agreement among the veteran drivers that chivalry is out for the duration of the contest. The stranded are left to find their own way home, and even death does not cancel the final battle of the top drivers of Europe. This year, two were killed.

I was a driver two years running. At dawn on Sunday morning, we started south from John O'Groats, a tiny fishing village in the far extremity of Scotland. It was midwinter. At noon, after bucking the snow on lonely roads, we were in the fog of Glasgow. There was a checkpoint there, to ensure that no driver had more than an hour's advantage. All night we were on the Great North Road, through Gretna Green and on the highway of English history that Dick Whittington used in his famous ride to York.

At dawn we were meeting the early London traffic. At eleven on Monday the car was slung on the cross-Channel steamer from Dover to Calais, and we could sleep for an hour. By nightfall on Monday we had circled Paris and were down the long straight road to the south that Napoleon built.

On Tuesday night, driving through the vast and gloomy suburbs of Lyons, drama and crime and death took a hand in the Monte Carlo Rally. My headlights picked out the dark warehouses and sheds of the manufacturing district. At this hour, no pedestrians were abroad, and Lyons, the great city of industrial France, was sleeping.

I stepped on the gas and sent the big car ahead to pick up the precious minutes that might mean the difference between victory and defeat in the Rally.

But not all the citizens of Lyons were in their beds that night. To the right, a hundred yards ahead, the darkness of the somber scene was ripped suddenly by a violent orange flame. The explosion seemed to press on our eardrums and rock the car.

The sudden thunder meant only one thing—dynamite. And against the brilliant flash, I saw running figures. One fell to the ground, and there came the crack of revolver shots. Then a limousine shot out from an alley and roared down the boulevard.

I jerked the car over to the figure lying in the road and slammed on the brakes. The other passengers woke up, and were out of the car to find a gendarme lying on the cobbles, already stained with blood. Another policeman ran from the shadows, revolver in hand.

"*Allons!*" he shouted. "*Suivez les bandits!*"

Ignoring his colleague on the ground, he motioned for us to get back in the car and piled in with us. As they shut the doors I slammed in the gear and fixed my eyes on the fast-disappearing black auto ahead.

The gendarme, urging more speed, told me in staccato French that the bandits had fallen into the police trap and shot their way out. The explosion had been their dynamiting of a warehouse, one of a series of robberies that, he said, had "outraged" the city.

That night we were the fastest car through the city of Lyons. Traffic signals meant nothing to the fleeing car. We were faster on the turns, faster on the wet cobbles. Gradually, we gained on the car, until the gendarme leaned out with revolver drawn to pump bullets into the rear tires.

He was a good shot, too. On the wet and slick road, the car suddenly slid sideways. I had an instant's impression of the car hopelessly out of control as the rear slid around, followed by a sickening crash as it dived into the side of the road and into a street lamp. Almost before I had skidded to a stop, the gendarme flung himself from the car, his pistol blazing.

One glance was enough for us to know that there was no need for the shooting. The car was telescoped against the post, and in the crushed remains were the dead bodies of two gangsters. The silence, after the nervous tension of the chase, was something you could feel.

Calmly, the gendarme thanked us. Then,

for the first time, he saw the big plaque on the radiator that proclaimed us to be competitors in the Rally.

He looked once more at the shattered car of the bandits and then at us.

"Allez!" he shouted. *"Allez a Monte Carlo! Et bonne chance, messieurs!"*

I slid in the gear and stepped on the gas. Death and crime in Lyons had gained us another minute.

SOON we were bucking the hairpin bends and lonely passes of the Alps, skidding through the sleeping villages and snaking down tortuous roads only half discernible in the snowdrifts. Just after dawn the sun gleamed behind an eastern snow-capped peak and we saw the far-off gleam of the Mediterranean.

The average speed required sounds simple on wide straight roads and through the well-marked valleys of France. But then comes the snow, the mountain road. Then comes the fifteen-minute delay for putting on chains, the invisible signpost that is missed in the dark, the mistaken road, the confusion of a big city's traffic, the delay of traffic lights in the suburbs. Suddenly you look at the speedometer and the clock and realize you won't eat this time, are thirty minutes behind, and run into fog.

This year, the crack drivers of Europe, driving stock cars from the best stables of Europe, were able to produce only 16 out of 328 entries to cross the finish-line without penalty. They had without exception an impressive knowledge of driving under difficulties. They were driving superb cars —Allard, the winner, was driving the Allard Special, retailing at $4,500. The British, fanatical enthusiasts for endurance tests, also secured second place with a Talbot and fourth and fifth with a Jaguar and a Jupiter.

Standard equipment for a Rally driver is a rope for towing, a pair of shovels for digging out of snowdrifts, and a long pole, tied to the side of the car, for levering the vehicle out of ditches or back onto its wheels. In the days when competitors drove through the Balkans from Greece and Rumania, they were fitted with extra gas tanks for long stretches of road without service stations. One American car limped into Monte Carlo without a pane of glass, no fenders and no lights, having been on its side three times and once on its back.

These incidents are in fact in line with the origin of the Rally, which appropriately grew from the wager of a sporting Englishman in the early days of continental motoring. Charles Jarrott, a rich and adventurous Londoner, had tired of the Blue Train, the de luxe streamliner of the day that wafted the wealthy from London to Monte Carlo in forty hours, including the cross-Channel ferry trip of one hour. It was winter of 1906, the fashionable zenith of the Riviera, and in his club one night Jarrott announced that he was going to drive down in his open, 7-liter Crosley, with its acetylene lamps, outside handbrake, and problematical tires.

"I'll beat the train," he said to a friend.

"Five hundred says you won't."

"It's a bet."

Jarrott, slamming his car through the dusty roads of France, bumping over the open drains of the villages and often reaching the then incredible speed of sixty miles an hour, made the trip in 37½ hours, and stood on Monte Carlo station platform waiting for the Blue Train and his £500. He had started a fashion.

Up till then the rich visitors to the Riviera had had their chauffeurs drive their cars sedately to the coast while they used the train. Railroad presidents fumed at the "insult" of anyone's beating the Blue Train, but there was no stopping the first pioneers.

Two weeks after Jarrott's feat, the Honorable Charles S. Rolls wheeled out of Monte Carlo and over the Alps in a Rolls Royce to cut two minutes off Jarrott's time. "I had to bribe railroad crossing keepers to open the gates," he said. "One day they'll stay open until a train's due." He was heard with disbelief, and with misgivings by the railroad.

In the next month two more Englishmen, one in an Itala and another in a Napier, roared down the roads of France, hooting and bribing, to beat the record again, and the level-crossing keepers had struck a bonanza.

These pioneers were averaging over 26 miles an hour for the 850 miles from London to Monte Carlo. That meant roaring wide open over stretches of terrain which have proved too arduous for many a mod-

ern car. They were, of course, spared some of the hazards and delays of modern traffic.

Five years after the Rolls Royce hit the front pages with this feat, the wideawake publicity men of Monte Carlo, the sharpest in Europe, saw no reason why they should not share the spotlight. If the newspapers and public, they figured, were excited by following the progress of auto-drivers to the south, Monte Carlo would certainly offer them a glass of champagne, a handshake from the Prince of Monaco, and a few thousand francs to spend at the tables. Further, without fee, they could all carry a large plate on the front of the car with the legend, MONTE CARLO RALLY, in case anyone liked to photograph them. The gathering would take place at the height of the season, and would serve to point up the fact that Monte Carlo usually enjoyed blazing sunshine while Northern Europe shivered in snow and fog.

The Monte Carlo Rally was born in 1911. The auto trade welcomed it as a chance to broadcast the dependability of the stock car, and amateurs who had the time and money for such an expedition found manufacturers anxious to lend them vehicles and general support.

The Rally had always attracted the adventurous, the colorful. One of the latter was a fabulous Englishman named Colonel P. T. Etherton, a former consul, of the British service, who had traveled the world in search of the extraordinary and the risky. To the colonel, a stocky and stalwart veteran of European roads, the lure of Monte Carlo meant more than the sunshine and the scenery. In the first hour that he arrived in Monte Carlo, he presented himself at the Casino and began to woo number seventeen at the roulette table.

The colonel was a determined man. In the first two hours number seventeen cooperated to the extent of doubling his stake. After four hours, the colonel was in a quandary, for not only had seventeen deserted him, but his number was called for the race up the formidable Mont des Mules, through the barricaded streets of the town and over the serpentine passes to the village of La Turbie.

This was a supplementary test, run in connection with the Rally.

We escorted the colonel away from the table almost by force. He was still muttering about the probabilities of number seventeen when he took the wheel, drove to the starting line, and waited for the starter's pistol.

The colonel had never driven so well as on that hair-raising ride to the top of the mountain. The car skidded around the hairpins, the wheels slipping on the loose stones, and roared up to the finish. The colonel hardly stopped to check his time, but turned round and accelerated down the alternative road and back to the Casino.

"You've won the class event!" they told him. "Ten thousand francs!"

"Ten thousand?" said the colonel. He bought a single white plaque and dropped it on number seventeen.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs!" intoned the croupier.

The ball clicked and jumped around the wheel, rolled into number two, into fifteen, into thirty-one, and then settled.

"Le dix sept," said the croupier. "Seventeen!"

The colonel, who believed that luck had been with him all through the Rally, collected his 360,000 francs, drank a glass of champagne, and went to bed.

Today, the Monte Carlo Rally is at the top of its popularity and glamor. This year, even when currency restrictions limited vacations in Europe, there were over 300 applications from Great Britain alone, and the 328 starters were the favored ones from nearly a thousand who wanted to prove that they could keep their eyes open for seventy hours and their wheels on the road.

Nature and the natural boundaries, mountain pass and fog and snow, will always supply enough hazards to limit to a lucky few the bug-eyed drivers who eventually reach the sunlit strand. And there will always be the strange inverted chivalry of the Rally which causes a crew, stranded and abandoned in the shivering night, to refuse help from another competitor and wave him on with the words: "Go ahead and good luck!"

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8. THE GREEN BRIGADE

THE THIRTY YEARS WAR started in 1618 when, at a meeting in Prague, the protestant nobles hurled the imperial councilors out of a window.

This strife was one of the most destructive ever waged. The population of Germany was decreased by half. Hundreds of villages and towns were wiped out of existence and the accumulated results retarded the development of the nation for a hundred years.

The war may be divided into three parts. The first phase saw the action carried on by the protestant princes, aided by the Danes. This period came to an end with the utter defeat of the Danish King at Lutter.

Sweden then bore the prominent par until Gustavus Adolphus was killed at Lutzen. After the defeat of the Swedes, at Nordlingen, France picked up the cudgels as a matter of policy.

It is the second part of the war that saw the Green Brigade in action, serving in the armies of Sweden. At this period of history, James VI of Scotland, had succeeded to the English throne as James I. The Scottish army had been disbanded and there were very few chances for advancement or excitement for Scottish youth. Thousands of them swarmed into Europe and were prominent in nearly every continental army. The Danish and Swedish services received the bulk of these recruits and at the time of the Swedish entry into the war, in Germany, there were upwards of ten thousand Scotchmen in her armies.

Gustavus had introduced new tactics in his forces. His cavalry was dispersed to back up the various bodies of infantry, instead of being held in one body. The infantry was trained to fight only six men deep, the cavalry three deep. Before the advance into Germany, the infantry was divided into brigades known as the Yellow, Blue, White and Green.

Troops of this period did not wear uniforms as we know them today. Armor was still used and troop affiliations were shown by accoutrement colors.

The first test was the defense of New Brandenburg. On his advance, the Swedish King left garrisons in many of the important towns and at New Brandenburg some seven hundred of the Brigade were stationed. Tilly, the imperial commander, was following up the Swedish advance and capturing the more important towns so as to menace the Swedish communications. The imperialists, after losing in the ratio of five to one, stormed New Brandenburg and, refusing quarter, killed all but two or three of the Scotch.

From this point, except for intervals, when the Brigade was in rest quarters to fill up its ranks they were continuously in action. Their tremendous losses were made up by fresh levies from Scotland and at Landsberg, Breitenfeld, Marienburg, Oppenheim and dozens of minor fights they maintained their high reputation.

After the Swedish defeat, before Nordlingen, France assumed the leading position instead of Sweden and as a new Scottish national army had been formed at home, the exodus of Scottish youths gradually dropped to a trickle and the Green Brigade took its place in history.

—By Howard R. Voight

The sergeant couldn't remember what he had lost—other than life itself. . . .

THREE MINUTES TO HELL

SERGEANT MATT GARRITY knew he could never take another one. The trouble was it had taken him too long to find it out. He rolled the stub of a cigar to the right side of his jaw and ran his eyes the length of the cabin. The men seemed nervous. He gripped the stogie in one grimy fist and spat toward a galvanized pail dancing on the aluminum flooring—and missed. Every time they hit an air pocket the pail bucked like a kid on a pogo stick. The sergeant amused himself by trying to nail it down with tobacco juice. So far he had been singularly unsuccessful.

Outside, the turbulent night air roared by, jet black except for the occasional blue-green exhaust flashes from the two C-47's riding wing position. Sergeant Garrity slouched in the bucket seat and leaned heavily on his back pack. The roar of the twin radials made conversation difficult. He let a long gray sliver of smoke ooze from his clenched teeth and began to study the sullen forms across the aisle. Some big,

By J. B. WEISS

He looked into the b l a c k void and held his breath. . . .

some little, some sleeping and some not. All different, yet all the same—all scared. He glared at them and they avoided his gaze.

Damned rookies, he thought.

Matt Garrity was Regular Army. He carried two hundred pounds spread over six feet of hard bone and spoken for by two massive fists. He'd served with the troops since the experimental battalion back in '40 and liked every minute of it—until tonight. Tonight there was something new in Matt Garrity. A luxury he had never before permitted himself. Something he tried to pass off as contempt for the new men—yet Garrity had jumped with new men before. He knew this was within himself. Something seemed very wrong.

At 0230 the lumbering transports picked up their bomber escort and struck an azimuth on the drop zone, now sixty minutes away.

He struggled to his feet and shuffled across the jammed passageway to where Corporal Duke Smith, second in command, sat scraping the grime from his fingers with a mud-stained jump knife. His jaw rose and fell rhythmically under tobacco stained teeth. He motioned one of the new men away and Garrity dropped heavily into his seat.

Corporal Smith looked up slowly.

"What's on your mind, Matt?"

The sergeant cupped his hands around a fresh light and nodded toward the hunched figures in the cabin.

"Wind dummies, Smitty—green as grass, most of 'em."

Corporal Smith flicked the big blade shut and jammed it into his boot top. He swore and thought, *Something's botherin' Matt sure as hell. . . .* As if there wouldn't be enough misery tonight. He pulled a worn map from his jacket and spread it on the seat.

"Never mind them, Matt. This is our baby. Let's go over it again."

Garrity shrugged.

The operation was strategically well suited to the use of airborne elements. The target, a signal station well back of the lines and fortified from the standpoint of land approach by its environment. It was garrisoned by not more than two line companies, according to latest intelligence estimates, and not too closely guarded due to its location and relative inaccessibility to ground forces.

G-2 had scheduled a regimental drop, combined with a frontal assault by seaborne infantry at 0400, on a new beachhead, twenty miles up the coast from the furthest American advance to date. At 0401, the Navy, under fighter cover, was to initiate the neutralization of the beach and coastal area as far inland as fire accuracy could be established. At 0500, fire in this sector would be lifted and the first waves would close on the beach. The parachute regiment, less Able company, was to descend on a previously scouted area twenty-five miles inland. Their mission, the usual. Bust up rear echelon communications and raise general hell until contact with the advance elements of the beach party could be maintained. The deepest point at which the two groups met and could be secured, was to serve as forward base of operations for the Eighth Army in this area.

The destruction of the signal post and its radar equipment was imperative in order to minimize advance notification of American intentions in this sector. For this, Regiment had selected Able company of its first batttalion, the second squad, the second platoon of which rode now with Matt Garrity toward the drop zone. At 0330, their part, the first in the overall picture would fall into place. The bomber escort droning alongside was cover-up. They would clobber a supply dump in the vicinity of the target in order to provide legitimate reason for aircraft in the area. It might buy a couple of extra minutes.

Sergeant Garrity straightened in his seat and drew deeply on the cigar. He held his watch for the corporal to see—forty-five minutes left.

"Better give 'em a look, Smitty. Fifteen minutes oughta be plenty."

His eyes narrowed as he watched them cluster about the corporal. If only he could hand over the mission as easily as he had given the map—just this once. Smitty could handle it alone if he had to. . . . He flicked an accumulation of sweat from his brow. The atmosphere seemed suddenly hot and more oppressive. Still, if he had to. . . . He cursed himself for thinking it and spat viciously once more at the bobbing pail.

He missed.

HE REPLACED the soggy butt in his jaw and lumbered to the rear where the supplies lay secured. He cracked the seal on the uppermost box and began thrusting clips of 30-caliber, high velocity into his web belt. He snapped a fresh clip of .45's into his service automatic and sat waiting for Corporal Smith. Smith was not long in coming.

"How they taking it, Smitty?"

The corporal squatted in front of an open crate; he stared at the sergeant queerly. "All right I guess, cocky like always. . . . It's not them I'm worried about, Matt."

Garrity rose as though he was prepared for it.

"No riddles, Smitty. Out with it."

Corporal Smith stood silent for a moment and then shook his head. He reached out reassuringly and held the sergeant's arm. It was the kind of thing you do for a kid outside the dentist's office.

"Not now, Matt, they're waiting."

Garrity turned quickly; his lip quivered. *God,* he thought, *what's wrong?* He shut his eyes tight for a minute and then made his way to the sweating group at the opposite end of the cabin. The grumbling evaporated and most of them looked at the floor. He tamped the glowing cigar on the heel of his boot and dropped it.

"You already got everything there is to know about tonight. G-2 believes an informed soldier is a good one. I can't argue that. I just got a couple of personal things to add.

"You can take 'em or leave 'em." They began to listen. "The way I see it, nobody's gonna expect this tonight—not this far back. As far as those bums down there are concerned, this is a bombing run, and that's gonna cost 'em plenty. This whole thing's been laid out for you and I don't figure to run into any real trouble unless we hit their MLR, which ain't very likely in this area. When we close in the door, keep it tight. If any one of you stops long enough to blow his nose you'll find yourself two hundred feet from the guy in front before you get out. Keep your feet together and your eyes open, and if you can't find me right away—" he glanced at his friend—"stick with Corporal Smith till you contact Platoon. It's mighty dark down there. You'll find ammo and grenades down the aisle. Drag it up and help yourself." He shifted awkwardly. "Any questions?"

There was a long pause. "Yeah. How do we get back?"

They roared.

Garrity swallowed hard and turned away. *You got more guts than me, kid,* he thought. He stumbled forward to the pilots's compartment and slammed the door behind him. When the crew chief looked up, he was trembling.

"Something wrong, Sergeant?"

Garrity reached for the instrument table and held on.

MONTREAL, RAILROAD METROPOLIS

WITH the steam locomotive fast disappearing from the American scene, more and more residents of the eastern United States are visiting our neighborly railroad metropolis to the north. There they find solace in feasting their eyes and focusing their cameras on one of the heaviest concentrations of steam engines still around. Vermonter Philip R. Hastings, for one, took his Speed Graflex across the border and captured some of the best photographs of steamers ever recorded.

Canada's Queen City, situated on the Island of Montreal in the broad St. Lawrence River, served by the great Canadian National and Canadian Pacific and approached by seven railroad bridges, has long been a mecca for steam power connoisseurs, just as *Railroad Magazine* has been *the* expert in the field for almost four decades. Don't miss *Montreal, Railroad Metropolis,* with its 20 great Hastings photos, in the authoritative August *Railroad Magazine.* On sale July 2, or send 35c to

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"Malaria, I guess. It'll pass." His head began to throb.

The crew chief slid over and nodded. "Park it." Garrity sank to the bench. The air corps man produced a small flask and shoved it toward him. "You got the shakes fella. Here." Garrity took an eager swig. The room began to settle.

The crew chief leaned toward him. "Everything all right back there, Sarge?"

Garrity looked up. "Yeah—sure. He grinned wryly, "That's not La Guardia field down there."

The crew chief shrugged. He held his wrist to the light. "I read twenty minutes, Sergeant. Check me."

Garrity spun his second hand to the air corps reading. "Your show, pal." He rose. "Take them in easy—they're good boys." He stepped back into the main cabin.

The passageway was jammed with empty crates and the tools of destruction. Considering the preparation necessary, there was little confusion. Smitty had seen to that. He reached up and tugged at the anchor cable running overhead—good and tight. *All I gotta do now is hook up,* he thought. *Hell.* . . . His head was burning. He loosened the collar of his jump jacket and kicked a path through the debris as he headed for the rear. Corporal Smith met him halfway.

"How's it look, Matt?"

They picked a spot and squatted. "Really want to know?"

The corporal was suddenly not sure, but the ball was rolling. He gave it another shove. "Matt, look at me. We don't have much time any more. I gotta know now. Are you sure there's nothing wrong?"

Garrity laughed aloud. "Wrong? Are you kiddin'? Regiment's got this damned thing figured to the last round. Just so many men per hundred high per square foot of drop zone. Hook 'em up and boot 'em out and they can't lose. You know damned well it's not that—it's me! How'd you like to have it on your head, Corporal? How'd you like to turn in dogtags and explain that junior got his lumps because he's six weeks outa basic and don't know a Buddha priest from a good sniper. How'd you like to play jumpmaster and big brother to a bunch of snot-nosed—"

"Matt! What the hell! What's—"

Garrity sprang to his feet. "Never mind what's eatin' me. Just follow your blasted crew down and hope to hell they're there when you need 'em. I'm done in!"

Corporal Smith started to rise, shock replaced by contempt. "That was big talk up front, Sergeant. Don't tell me Matt Garrity is gonna freeze in the door like a lousy three jump—"

Garrity cut him short. He spat his words slowly. "Don't worry, Corporal. Garrity goes first!"

"Fifteen minutes, Sergeant." The crew chief poked his head into the cabin.

GARRITY looked around, suddenly aware of the eyes focused upon him. He felt old and very tired. Without knowing exactly why, he put his arm around the corporal. "Pretty soon now, Smitt—c'mon, let's get 'em started." He cupped his hands. "Into your gear, boys—lock and load."

The corporal stared at him wordlessly.

He flipped the bulky back pack over his head and shimmied into the harness. He snapped the leg and chest straps and tightened the chin cup till it cut.

Garrity squinted down the length of the cabin. Now they were moving. He paused to help the number two man, fumbling with a first aid packet. The kid's eyes were like wet ping pong balls. He turned a streaked face up at the sergeant and grinned helplessly. It was a timeless gesture—as young as the kid himself and as old as the wars that foster it. How do you comfort a guy who's so scared he can't talk when you're facing the same thing he is? Garrity placed a rough hand on his helmet. There wasn't much else he could do. He felt dizzier by the minute.

From the pilot's compartment, a piercing buzzer sounded the ten minute warning. A small light to the right of the door blazed red. He stifled a sob; his voice shook.

"Stand up and hook up!"

Like beings from another time, steel-capped hunchbacks, sixteen paratroopers tore themselves from the security of their seats.

"Check equipment!" They went through the motions. It was too late to worry now.

Garrity watched through hazy eyes as the crew chief approached, pencil in hand.

He scrawled his signature and nodded toward the door. The air corps man dragged in the heavy canvas. A black jet of air thundered past.

The beginning of eternity.

He rolled back the sleeve of his jump jacket and peered at his watch. It was hard to focus. By the pale green dial he read 0325—five minutes!

"Sound off for equipment check!" The sound of his own voice startled him. It seemed muffled and far away. Butterflies had begun their flight in the pit of his stomach. It was becoming increasingly difficult to concentrate. They counted off mechanically, and waited.

Garrity stumbled to the head of the column. "Close up and stand in the door!"

Shoving their static lines overhead, the second squad, second platoon, Able Company shuffled toward the black void waiting to swallow them. The kid in number two slot leaned forward and pressed tightly against the sergeant. His breath came in brief, halting sobs.

Three minutes left of life!

Matt Garrity pivoted to the right and crouched in the door. The thundering night whipped his sweating cheeks and bloodshot eyes cruelly. He stared straight ahead, not feeling, not caring, fingers groping for the hard door frame. The blazing, blinding red light seemed to shimmer and grow until it reached out and pounded against his throbbing temples. He fought for control. The door began to sway. The anchor cable seemed to oscillate to and fro beyond his reach. He tried to shake it off. His legs trembled.

Think, man, think. . . . The lumbering transport leveled off and went into its measured run over the drop zone. His head was on fire. . . . *Gotta check again . . . no time . . . no time* . . . He looked down into the black void and held his breath. The piercing red beacon turned green.

Sergeant Garrity closed his eyes. He threw his right leg out and pitched forward.

MOMENTS later, the air corps crew chief strode wearily to the door. He knelt to pull in the flapping static lines; unconsciously he began to count—and stopped. His jaw fell.

"Lieutenant—back here, quick!" The co-pilot scrambled to his side. He looked up, beads of perspiration forming on his forehead.

"Count 'em, sir. We had sixteen men. Somebody never even hooked up!"

They looked at each other for a long moment and then, as one, turned to face the door—the black sky—the raging wind that had already obliterated poor Garrity's scream. A scream that might have broken the green kid's morale—the kids Garrity had looked after so well.

Yet ask any who jumped with him that night.

The sergeant hollered, "Geronimo!"

RIDE THE KILLER DOWN!

By George C. Appell

Cortland Lacey, renegade, killer—and gentleman—had served too well the only gods he knew: his guns. But now, with the posse closing in, would he have time to do one last unselfish act, before he came to the end of his smoky, violent trail?

Plus: Blazing action novelettes and short stories by all your favorite Western authors!

September Issue—On Sale—June 25th!

NEW WESTERN MAGAZINE 25c

By FRED LANE

He wasn't afraid, Stormy wasn't—not of storms, life, love, or death. . . .

SEA WINNER

STREET lamps flickered palely along the Embarcardero. A thick mist, driven by a biting north wind, swirled along the wharves as Marty Stevens paused by a darkened store window at the foot of Sacramento Street. He was finding it hard to believe that Stormy Pete and the *Sea Queen* were gone—that out by the Farralones, shrouded in fog, wreathed in flame, the old skipper had rung down: "Finished with engines."

Distantly, a fog horn moaned and the

sound made him think of a girl's eyes. Blue eyes, wide, honest and shining in oval features crowned with simple golden braids. He wouldn't be able to meet those eyes squarely. Not tonight, he couldn't.

He stepped hesitantly to the glass door, staring in. Far to the rear, light glowed, and so he knew they were there—Stormy Pete's friends. Merv Harris, whose marine outfitting place was where the clan gathered. Bumboat George, who took his wares over the gangways of a thousand ships. Captain Carey of the liner *Nile,* just in from an outland port with the casualties of a far off war. And, the *Queen's* crew—Joe Manifold, her mate, Pinky Malone, her engineer, and the rest.

They'd all be sitting around the table in Merv Harris' back office, trying not to look at the vacant chair by the window. Stormy Pete's chair. And Karen? Yes, she would be with them. Those were her people.

He stood, trembling slightly, steeling himself to go in. For that was where the story was. The one he owed them.

THAT was from a night when the tule fog was murky gray over Rotten Row, obscuring from disdainful eyes the forgotten hulks that lay huddled in the muddy backwaters of the estuary.

Marty Stevens had parked his car and, hatbrim slanted jauntily, trenchcoat buttoned up around his ears, walked impatiently past sooty warehouses and sprawling piles of rusting ironware. At the lip of the bay he could hear the gurgle of the incoming tide among the barnacled pilings. The smell of oil and creosote lifted on an updraft and he grimaced.

At the foot of an open wharf, light spilled into his face and a watchman's voice inquired: "What's your business, mister?"

"It's all right, pop. I'm from the *Herald.*" Marty Stevens flashed his press badge. "You think maybe I'm trying to steal one of those crates? I'm looking for the *Sea Queen,* pride of the Scandahoovian Navy. She tied up around here?"

"End of the wharf, west side."

"Thanks, pop."

Marty Stevens went on, hardly aware of the ghostly shapes of the unwanted ships. Already he was dreaming up sharp, clever words for his feature story on Stormy Pete Peterson. Imagine it! The old has-been, given a new lease on life—a lease to haul garbage out beyond the Farralones. The punch-happy ex-champ, sweeping out the gym for his cakes. A laugh—but a story.

There she was—the *Sea Queen.* Stormy Pete's pride and joy, looming in the fog, a light gleaming from her apple-box aft. A stubby, pushed-in old bucket, nuzzling the log fenders and groaning with age. Queenly? Sure, like an old-fashioned horse trough she was queenly. Still, Marty Stevens figured, just the deal for handling swill.

He went aboard, across the swaying gangway and aft to the captain's cabin. The door swung open to his knock and a bulky form filled the frame.

"Captain Peterson? Marty Stevens from the *Herald.* My paper wants a story about you."

A surfy voice told him to come in and Marty Stevens stepped across the weather sill, talking: "You may remember me, Cap. Ran into you a couple of times in Merv Harris's place. Human interest is what I'm after. You know, Stormy Pete sails again."

He was suddenly aware of the girl who sat on the tiny settee. He snatched off his hat and smoothed back his dark, curly hair. Simple beauty, he was marveling. And he did mean simple. Wholesome, fresh as a budding cornflower. All she needed was a milkpail and a sunbonnet—on a garbage scow.

"My granddaughter. My son's little girl, Karen. She comes to see the old man, sometimes."

Marty heard himself saying how do you do and continued staring. He couldn't help it. This was a socker. Yes, it was. A jolt right down to his toes. He couldn't seem to get enough of those guileless blue eyes, the coronet of golden braids, the complexion that wasn't bought.

What's wrong with you, Marty? he asked himself. *Nothing. Nothing at all. It's just that you never see girls like this one. Not in the places you get to. And now break it off. She isn't for you. She's the kind to keep a lamp in the window for some bright young ship's mate. Get to work, Marty. Get your story.*

So he tore his gaze from the girl, strad-

dled a seachest, saying: "Well, Captain, according to the scuttlebutt, nobody could touch you when it came to navigating a steam schooner in and out of the north coast lumber ports. What about shipwrecks, storms, rescues?"

The old man leaned back, tamping tobacco into a blackened pipe. The seamy lines of his sea-weathered face deepened and he shook his shaggy gray head.

"You just write that my *Queen* is being refitted for a new trade. You say that my old mate, Joe Manifold, and Pinky Malone, my engineer, are coming back with me. You say we got a job of work to do, that's all."

Marty Stevens choked back a snicker. Man, that accent was ripe. Yumpin' Yiminy comic book stuff. But maybe he could use some of it at that. For laughs.

"He did, too, have some experiences," the girl protested. "He was shipwrecked in a skys'l yarder off Cape Horn. He saved the crew of the *Viking* off Flattery. He—"

"Karen—"

"That's good stuff, Cap. Let's not be too modest. What about that nickname, Stormy? You didn't get that rowing a boat in Golden Gate park."

"They call him Stormy," the girl explained, "because he always put to sea regardless of the weather. He still would, too."

"Fine. Tell us about the worst storm you ever bit into, Cap. Weren't you ever afraid of losing your ship?"

"Afraid?" Stormy Pete looked puzzled. "Storms are the same. Some worse than others. A man waits for fair weather he don't go to sea very much."

Marty frowned and tried a new tack. Time slipped by and he wasn't getting very far with the old boy. Finally: "Look, Cap. I need something to hang a story on. Something to make you look good—"

Marty suddenly drew back, aware of a pair of fierce blue eyes boring into his, a pipestem waving under his nose and a voice with the crash of breakers in it.

"Don't you write no glory for me, son. You tell about the steam schooners. About the little wooden ships and the men who sail the redwood coast fair weather and foul, with no wireless, no pilots, no docks, even. You write about all those skippers who bring lumber to build the city you live in. Those sailors, those ships, maybe they like to be remembered a little, now."

The roar subsided and Marty said uneasily, "Sure, Cap—" *Nuts,* he thought. *Me write a lot of sentimental syrup about the mud-flat fleet and the skidrow heroes that manned it? The old guy's got a few loose rivets. He ought to be in a sailor's home instead of skippering a ship. Even a garbage scow.*

"Sure, Cap," he repeated, rising. "I'll think about that angle." He glanced at his watch, then looked at the girl. "I have my car, Miss Peterson." This wasn't a pitch. This girl wasn't for him. Her kind played for keeps and Marty wasn't having any of that. He was just being polite, nothing more. "Could I give you a lift somewhere?"

He could. She didn't protest that it might be out of his way. She didn't hesitate nor lower her eyelashes. She just smiled and said, "Why, that would be nice."

AND it was nice, too. Her hand was warm in his as he helped her down the companion and across the gangway. As he drove slowly through traffic and across the fog-bound bay bridge to the city, they talked eagerly, gaily, almost like old friends after a long parting. Marty couldn't quite understand it.

No, she hadn't any boy friends. She hadn't anyone except her grandfather. Her mother hadn't lived long after Dad's ship was lost. Yes, she worked. For a ship chandlery. A secretary. And she lived with two other girls in a walk-up flat on Pine Street. Which, she concluded, was quite enough about Karen Peterson for the time being and what about Marty Stevens?

Marty? Just a slug newspaperman, slamming around on the City Hall or waterfront beat for guild scale and overtime. Sure, maybe he dreamed about knocking off the Pulitzer someday, or even writing a book. The Great American Novel by Marty Stevens. Get in line, folks, for the great man's autograph. . . .

That was the way it went until Marty pulled up in front of an old gingerbread building, wondering how he had got there so quickly. And then he was wondering how he happened to be standing in a dark-

ened entrance, hesitating, like a high school kid on his first date.

All right, Marty, he warned himself. *This isn't your cup of tea. Besides, you're giddy tonight. Too much fog, maybe. You just say good-by and fade—fast.* But, he didn't go. He didn't even know how it happened, but all of a sudden, his arms were around her and he was drawing her close. Their lips met and, for a long moment, the world spun.

He released her finally and they stood back, looking at each other.

"Hello, Karen," Marty said softly.

The answer was a broken, whispered: "Hello, Marty."

He left her then, abruptly, not because he had a deadline to meet, but because he needed to think this thing out. He still had a little time and maybe a quick beer would help. So Marty Stevens kicked it around in Murphy's Place on Mission Street across from the *Herald* building. A second beer slowed his pulse and he thought maybe he was getting some answers.

For me, he told himself, *she's something brand new. An apple straight from the tree instead of a fruit stand.* For her, Marty Stevens was the guy who happened along when the apple was ripe. Harvest moon stuff. Ain't had no lovin' since January, February, March and—never ever.

That's how it was. How he'd play it, too. *Only, watch yourself, Marty, boy. Some day you'll pick yourself a girl for keeps. From Nob Hill, maybe. After you've won the Pulitzer. When you've written what there is to write. Meantime, don't let old Ma Nature sell you any suburban real estate.*

So he had it all figured out and it didn't bother him any more. Not much, anyway. He'd better get himself across the street and warm up that typewriter. Deadlines can creep up on a guy.

It wasn't the deadline that worried him. Because it came out smooth and easy—Marty Stevens' story about Stormy Pete and the *Sea Queen.* It came out bright and gleaming like a string of shining beads. He had only to think of the sea-beaten old man and the creaky old tub and the glittering phrases leaped from brain to fingertip to typescript.

That, he assured himself when he was done, *is one hell of a good story.*

ONLY he hadn't used that precious brain child. Not right then. And now, almost a year later, Marty Stevens, standing in the fog-wet darkness outside Merv Harris's place, was asking himself why he'd clipped those pages together, put them away in his desk, then hammered out a factual, uninspired account of the *Sea Queen's* refitting. Why had he saved those brittle words to use months later when Stormy Pete took the *Queen* out on her first run to the Farralones?

Quit stalling, he told himself. *Don't stand out here with your bones shaking like dice in a cup. Go on in there and face those people. Stormy Pete's people. Go on in there and face yourself. . . .*

He did go in finally, forcing himself across the threshold, past the showcases of nautical insignia, sheath knives and boatswain's whistles, the racks of uniforms and oilskins, toward the yellow glow in the rear. He stood for a while by the office door, his glance lingering on a model square-rigger, on the paintings and photos of old ships and sailors on the walls. Anywhere, except toward the table.

Marty didn't want to look over there but he couldn't put it off any longer. He squared his shoulders and went in, only half seeing them in the blue fog of tobacco smoke—Merv, himself, Bumboat George, Joe Manifold, Pinky Malone and the rest.

They didn't look up as Marty Stevens entered. They sat, staring at nothing. All except Karen. The girl sat rigidly, head bowed, next to the vacant chair by the window. Stormy Pete's chair.

Marty didn't join them. He sat alone by the door and waited in the crushing silence. For a brief moment he caught a splash of light on golden braids and that brought back another night in Stormy Pete's cabin on the *Sea Queen* in Rotten Row. And he was remembering too, a darkened doorway, a kiss, and a husky, "Hello, Marty."

After that? Well, wasn't it the way he'd wanted it. The way he'd figured it all out over a couple of beers in Murphy's Place? Yes, it was. There were dinners at little Italian restaurants in North Beach, walks through Chinatown, Sunday picnics at the beach. Simple stuff. A far cry from Murphy's and the downtown joints where he used to keep a barstool warm and bat the

breeze around with the guys and gals until closing time.

Came the night on Telegraph Hill when Marty and Karen leaned over the stone guard rail watching the lights on the bay below. That was the eve of Stormy Pete's comeback. In the morning the *Sea Queen* would sail again and the *Herald* would carry a story about it. Marty Stevens' story.

That was the night when the words that were deep inside Marty almost leaped past his lips. "Karen—" he began, and hesitated.

Put down that pen, Marty, he cautioned himself. *Don't you sign anything. Ma Nature, that foxy old supersalesgal is trying to sell you a package of phony sentiment, all wrapped in ribbons and labeled love. And you're not having any.*

But, it was close. Too close, Marty thought, when he went down to the office and took the string of shining beads from his desk. A new lead was all the story needed. A new lead and he let it go. *Stormy Pete sails again—* And, in the morning, it didn't look bad. Not bad at all. Except to Karen.

So she hadn't liked that sweet job of work. So he was afraid to write what he truly felt. That's what she said. Him, afraid? Of what? Marty Stevens, who could lift the sheet from a stiff in the morgue and crack wise to the coroner? And so he'd left his heart out of it, too. Since when was a bleeding heart a necessary part of a newsman's tool kit?

And after that it was so easy. He had to work late. He was called out of town. Karen soon got the idea. Only, Marty couldn't understand why the old way of life had no more relish—why he had to fight down the desire to get on the telephone and say: *"Karen, darling, what about dinner tonight at Fisherman's Wharf? Cracked crab and fried prawns—"* The way it used to be. But, he fought it. He fought it, right down to the bitter end. And the bitter end was now, tonight, when Marty Stevens sat by himself in Merv Harris' back offce, and light splashed on a girl's golden braids.

It was Joe Manifold who broke the stunning silence. Joe Manifold, the *Queen's* barrel-chested mate.

"Captain Carey's overdue," he said hollowly.

"He'll be along." That was Bumboat George. Needles? Anchors? Bibles? George had them. He tapped the table idly with square fingers. "He knows we're waiting."

"He'll come." Merv Harris spoke softly. "In the meantime—" Merv, high priest of the marine outfitting place on lower Sacramento. Seaboots, gold stripes? Cash, credit? It didn't matter. It had always been that way. Since the windship and Barbary Coast days. In the tradition.

"In the meantime," Merv was taking the helm. "I have something here." Merv had a clipping. A newspaper clipping he'd been saving. He had it now, in his hand.

Marty Stevens knew. He sat hunched over, chin in hands, waiting. He heard Karen's muffled: "No, Merv, please—"

But Merv was in the channel now, and there was no turning back. His smooth, ageless features held a taut half-smile as he began to voice the printed words. The bright glittering words that a clever young waterfront reporter had written about Stormy Pete and the *Sea Queen.*

And when he was done, there was a brief silence before Pinky Malone looked up with a cackling laugh. "Say, that's good stuff. 'The garbage must go through, fair weather or foul'. Like the mail, huh? How about that?"

"I like some of the other snappy lines," said Bumboat George. "Imagine, calling the *Queen* a salad barge."

"Or the seagull's friend."

"What about that 'apple core and orange peel run'? That's a dilly."

"Yeah," said Joe Manifold heavily. "Takes brains to think those things up. Me, I never could write."

"You got to be born with the gift, Joe."

"The trouble is—" Merv was out of the channel, now, steering for the open sea. "The trouble is, there's too much left to the imagination. Like some of this new music you hear. No tune to it."

"They don't play the melody any more," said Bumboat George. "They just tootle all around it to show how good they can play. Get right, Merv. You're old-fashioned."

"I guess maybe I am. Like the old lumber schooners and their skippers. Remember Salvation John Johnson? He—"

"Remember him!" interrupted Joe Mani-

fold. "I sailed with John. I saw him take the old *Celilo* across Goose Bay bar sidewise. Sidewise, mind you, and with a sea running. And him with a Bible in his hand while he—"

"What about Shoalwater Kelley?" broke in Pinky Malone. "He hugged the beach so close you could hear the roosters crowing and the dogs barking on the shoreside farms. That's how he navigated in fog—"

There was more. Much more. They talked of Whisky Jack Horner, Stand-by Swenson, and all the iron sailors who manned the wooden ships. Running into the surf-beaten coves and dogholes, snaking the lumber down on cables from the overhead cliffs. Then, to sea again, decks awash, southbound. They needed the lumber down there, didn't they? To build cities.

If Marty Stevens had raised his head he could have seen the vacant chair by the window where Stormy Pete had always sat. Stormy Pete, one of the last of the old breed. But Marty didn't look up. He was afraid of a pair of blue eyes.

What's eating you, Marty? he wanted to know. *What happened to the guy who could lift the sheet from a body in the morgue and then crack wise to the coroner? Who could quip clever at an execution? Who could—*

His thoughts collapsed as the outside door slammed and heavy steps clumped the floor. He raised his head to see a large, ruddy-faced man with the four gold bands of a master on his sleeves come through the door and take a place at the table. Captain Carey of the liner *Nile,* just in from an outland port with the casualties of a far off war.

Captain Carey knew what had happened out there in the fog. He was the proper one to tell them. That was why they'd waited for him. That was why they sat now, heads inclined, while the captain filled his pipe and then carefully lit it.

"WELL—" The deep voice began and suddenly the blue tobacco smoke became a swirling mist and the room was the bridge of a homing liner. Twenty thousand tons of steel, probing through the gray wall shrouding the sea lanes out by the Farralones. In an hour or so she was due to steam in through the Golden Gate and warp into a berth where the welcoming crowds, the bands and the ambulances waited.

The liner's fog whistle smashed into the damp grayness and, when the vibration died, Captain Carey was aware of the bubbling whisper of the sea along the hull, the cry of an unseen gull, a bell buoy clanging somewhere. These sounds he knew and he found comfort in them. It was the other thing—the squat, ugly capsule of metal drifting out there some place—that fed the tension lines creasing his features.

When the radio had reported the mine, the *Nile's* mate said, "Probably it's drifted well to the south by now. Likely washed ashore at Montara or Half Moon Bay. Nothing to worry about."

Captain Carey wasn't so sure. He could not afford to be. The mine had been reported to the coast guard by a purse seiner off Point Reyes the previous day. It was seen again briefly by a crab fisherman farther south. Was it, he wondered, a laggard from the last war, caught in the weed somewhere, before drifting on across the sea with the currents? Or was it an advance guard of the new conflict, flaming now on the far side of the Pacific?

It didn't matter. Captain Carey was only sure that he neither understood nor trusted these lethal steel eggs that hatched out death. He knew what they could do to ships and men. That was why he stood in the port wing of the liner's bridge, knuckles white on the rail as he stared into the gray nothingness.

The *Nile's* whistle ripped out another warning, and then Captain Carey heard another ship's voice answer from the void. He knew that ragged whistle. Hearing it now even eased his tension a little. That was the *Sea Queen* out there. Stormy Pete's ship, on her regular run out beyond the Farralones with a cargo of refuse.

It would be fine, he was thinking, to see old Stormy again. Maybe even tonight he would walk into Merv's place and there would be Stormy Pete in his chair by the window. Joe Manifold would be there, too, and Pinky Malone and the *Queen's* people. And maybe Bumboat George. He was thinking too, about Stormy's granddaughter, wondering if Karen had ever married that young newspaperman she was so crazy about. Captain Carey wasn't quite

sure about that young fellow. He wasn't at all certain that he deserved a girl like Karen. He—

The ragged voice spoke again. Closer, now. Captain Carey stiffened. He felt a gust of chill wind on his cheek just as a segment of the fog bank lifted. Then, in the rift, he saw the stubby little *Sea Queen*, moving westward off the *Nile's* starboard bow.

The *Nile's* whistle spoke twice. There was no danger. Stormy Pete knew what he was about. Stormy lived with fog. Some said he could even see through the stuff. Then Captain Carey gasped. Was he seeing things, or had Stormy hauled to starboard? If so, he was on a collision course. The liner couldn't maneuver now. There was too much way on twenty thousand tons of steel.

He couldn't be sure because the fog was closing in again and the *Queen* was lost to sight. But Captain Carey saw something else—a dark speck, lifting on a swell crest almost dead ahead. He raised his binoculars and found it again, just before the fog swallowed it—a squat, ugly capsule of metal, half-submerged. A steel egg, waiting to hatch out death.

Captain Carey lunged for the wheelhouse, orders bursting past his lips. The *Nile's* engine room telegraph jangled and the big ship shuddered as she swerved to port and swept on. The general alarm was clanging and the crew running for fire and boat stations. Only, it was too late. Captain Carey was sure of that as he stood, shoulders slumped, on the bridge. There was too much leeway.

The *Nile* would get it to starboard, probably abaft the beam.

The liner plunged on, shaking and racking as she tried to check her speed. There was no panic. The men were at their stations and the lifeboats were swinging out. The radio was shrilling for help. They'd save as many of those crippled and wounded men as they could, but—

Suddenly, the air was filled with sound and force. Concussion reached the *Nile* with vicious impact, shattering glass, sending men sprawling. But, the liner went on, bumping and scraping through a sea littered with wreckage—all that was left of a little steam schooner. All that was left of Stormy Pete and his *Sea Queen*.

THEY were all back now. Back at Merv Harris' place on lower Sacramento Street and, for a long moment, nobody spoke. Marty Stevens thought he heard the distant moan of a ragged fog whistle, but he could not be sure.

That was when Joe Manifold said fiercely, "He made us all get off the *Queen* when he saw that mine. The *Nile* was running down and it was plain that she'd get it. So Stormy made us take the lifeboat and then he took the wheel himself. He wasn't afraid, Stormy wasn't. He wasn't afraid of anything. Storms, life, love, death—" His voice trailed off.

"It was Stormy's show," Pinky Malone murmured. "We knew that. His and the *Queen's*."

Marty Stevens was on his feet. He stared at the vacant chair by the window. Stormy Pete's chair. Then he was looking into a pair of eyes. Blue eyes, wide, honest and shining in oval features crowned with simple golden braids. *I'll be back*, Marty's eyes said. *I'll be back, Karen. Please wait for me. And then—*

He spun around and went away from there, out into the fog-wet night. He had his story now. The one he owed them. He didn't need to hide behind the brittle words to write it, either. He knew that when the words began to spill out of him. They came from deep inside, from heart to fingertip to typescript.

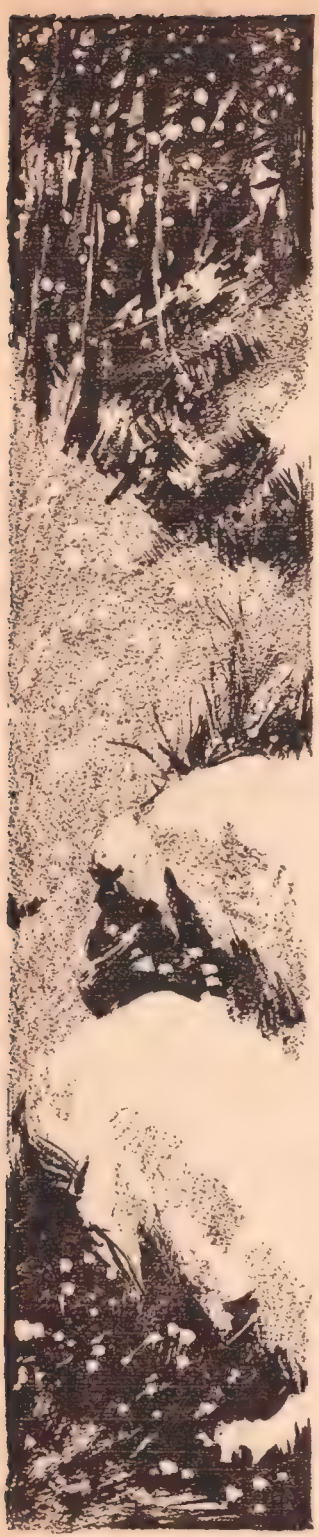
"Streetlamps flickered palely along the Embarcardero. A thick mist, driven by a biting north wind swirled along the wharves as the waterfront reporter. . . ."

ASK ADVENTURE'S NEWEST EXPERT

Mr. Hilbert Schenck, Jr., writes:

"Besides experience with equipment using air or oxygen supply, I have done a good deal of spear fisning with mask and bathing suit, and am familiar with the problems of this booming sport, particularly in the Southern California area. One thing, however, I would appreciate it if you would specify—no amateur should try deep water stuff until he is no longer an amateur, since decomposition problems are simply too tricky and dangerous at greater depths. Anyway, I can promise enough adventure to make almost anyone happy above the sixty-foot level."

See ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS, page 106—DIVINE, SPEAR FISHING.



COLD TRAIL

By CHICK MANWARING

CARSTON stared at the stout man stumbling across the windswept snow in front of him. The man's clumsy efforts to keep his footing and at the same time pull the sled they'd made of the plane's landing skis was almost pathetic. But to Carston, crouched uncomfortably on the sled, his broken ankle throbbing with pain at each slight jar, his incompetence was irritating.

"Stop a minute, doc," he called.

Doc Binnell turned around facing him. Cold as it was, there were tiny beads of sweat forming on his heavy face, and his eyes held a look of uncertainty and fear.

"You sure this is the right way?" His eyes mirrored the resentment he felt as he looked at Carston. "This wasn't in the bargain, you know."

Carston looked at him steadily and managed to keep the impatience out of his voice. "Look, doc, I don't like it any more than you do." He paused to light a cigarette, and put his glove back on hastily against the sudden bite of cold. The temptation was strong in him to set this man straight once and for all, but he'd always despised a man who'd say, "I told you so," when things went wrong. Although he'd certainly be justified in saying it now. Doc Binnell had come into

He yelled again, and saw the bulky form of Binnell staggering toward him. . . .

this with his eyes open. He'd been warned that the plane was unsafe, and he had known he could expect no help from a man with a broken ankle if trouble came. Carston took a deep drag from his cigarette and smiled with grim humor.

"You stopped me from getting a new plane, doc. Don't blame me for the crash."

Binnel's tone was angry. "How far to Elkridge?"

Carston hesitated. "Twenty—thirty miles," he said slowly.

Binnell seemed about to say something more, but instead he clamped his lips together and turned grimly into the steep slope ahead of them.

Carston leaned back against the doctor's bag and tried to relax. He was a lean, broad-shouldered young man, whose normally cheerful blue eyes were clouded with worry now as he studied the terrain. They were still in the thick growth of timber which sheltered them from the cutting winds. But ahead he could see the high-piled drifts at the foot of the mountain, where the trees began to thin out, with only a few ragged piñons and oaks. The bitter wind, and the mountain towering above could be rough. But they had it to cross. The river lay on the far side. Once there, they should make it because the river led to Elkridge—but a good fifteen miles of drifts, slides, and drop-offs lay before them.

He appraised the lowering, black clouds on the horizon. A norther was brewing. It was below zero now, and would get steadily colder as the day wore on. The best bet would be to hole up in the timber with a good fire until the weather cleared.

He looked at the fat man struggling ahead of him and knew it was time to ask the question he'd been holding back. The question he'd dreaded asking. "Doc," he called, "this trapper in Elkridge—does it matter how long before we get there?"

Binnell turned to face him, and there was no uncertainty in his eyes now. His voice was confident and sure, filled with the authority based on knowledge. "All the difference," he said, "I've got to operate within twenty-four hours, or—he'll probably die." He turned around, leaning again into the wind. But he was slowing already, and his breathing was heavy and labored.

After a while, Carston called, "Take a break, doc."

Binnell stopped and slumped down onto the icy crust beside the sled. His face was haggard, and his mouth hung open loosely as he sucked in great lungfuls of the thin, high air.

Carston slapped his hands together, feeling the sting as the blood coursed through them. He noticed the sky had turned the color of old lead, and a premature dusk was crowding down the mountain, looming bare and forbidding above them. He waited until Binnell's breathing had quieted.

"Doc," he said finally, "it's going to be tough pulling me up that mountain. Maybe you'd better gather wood for a fire and I'll stay here. You can send back for me."

Binnell's head jerked erect and his eyes looked accusingly at Carston. "It's your job to guide me. I don't know the country. Believe me, if I did, I'd go on alone."

Carston held his temper in check. "Have it your way," he said at last. "You're doing the work."

Binnell got up then and began his slow progress through the crusted snow.

CARSTON leaned back on the sled and smiled without humor. His luck had been pretty ragged lately. The crack-up when they'd been so close to Elkridge by air, and so far by foot. And exactly a week before, to the day, he'd had the accident in Lockland. The pain in his ankle now reminded him of the sudden agony he'd felt when the car had crashed into him. It had skidded on the icy street just as he'd started to cross. He'd seen it at the last instant and jumpel back, but the glare ice had been treacherous and he'd slipped and fallen. He'd been lucky, though, that the car had pinned his leg, instead of his head against the curb.

Passersby had carried him to the doctor's office, and he'd first met Binnell to talk to. He hadn't liked him on sight, but there'd been no choice. Binnell was the only doctor in Lockland. He'd wondered if the doctor had sensed his antagonism as he was setting his leg.

"Hurt?" Binnell asked.

"Hell, no. Not with you doing the job."

"I could give you a shot," Binnell said,

his lips tightening, "I usually do—with women and children."

"I'm surprised," Carston said coolly.

Binnell looked at him squarely then, and said deliberately. "It was nothing personal, Carston. As a member of the bank's board of directors, I voted against your loan because I believed it to be a bad risk. I still do."

Carston looked at the narrowed eyes staring at him almost belligerently. He knew it was personal, regardless of what Binnell would have him believe. Binnell thought he was a bum.

"All right, doc," he said slowly. "Maybe I can cast a vote for you sometime."

The time had come sooner than he'd anticipated. Less than a week later, Binnell had come to see him at his boarding house. He had seemed hesitant and embarrassed.

"I came to ask a favor," he said.

Carston stared at him in amazement. The man had as much gall as he had fat. He was forcing him to give up bush flying because he couldn't continue with the worn-out plane he had. He'd been the cause of the bank's refusal to grant him a loan for a new one, and now . . .

He felt like laughing out loud in Binnell's face.

"I want you to fly me to Elkridge," Binnell said.

Carston was surprised in spite of himself. He gave a short, bitter laugh. "You're crazy," he said. "My old clunk would never make it."

Binnell's eyes held a desperate look. "There's a trapper in Elkridge who needs a doctor. I tried to get another plane, but I can't." Binnell's jowls sagged, his eyes were almost pleading.

Carston looked at him steadily for a moment. For some reason, this was important to the doctor. Here was his chance to even up the score. His chance to make this man grovel and beg. Then he could humiliate him by refusing, but—he shrugged.

"Binnell," he said slowly, "I don't know how far we'll get, but if you want to chance it—"

They'd started out, and for a time, Carston had thought they might make it, and then the oil line had burst and he'd had to set down in the snow.

HE LOOKED at the sagging shoulders of the man ahead of him, and felt a grudging stir of respect for his bulldog determination. It was plain to see he was all in, but still he went on. Why was this so important to him? He couldn't be blamed if he turned back.

He called out to the other to rest, and when Binnell had slumped in the snow beside him, he said, "It's about ten miles over the hump, and it looks like storm." Even as he spoke, the snow began to fall with a steady silentness. On the slopes ahead of them, the wind was making twisting spirals of the powdered whiteness.

"Doc," he said abruptly, making up his mind, "get us back down in the timber. We'll have to hole up until she blows over."

The doctor's voice was edged with panic. "We can't," he said. "Don't you understand? We can't stop."

He heaved himself to his feet slowly.

"Doc," Carston said quietly, "who's the trapper in Elkridge?"

Binnell's voice was calm now. He had regained control again. He looked briefly at Carston, then his eyes searched the slope ahead of him.

"My son," he said. He turned and bent into the fierce gusts of whipping snow, beginning his slow climb again.

For an hour they moved upward into the blinding storm, and Carston could feel the cold soaking deeper into him. His legs felt like needles were gouging them, and he choked back an involuntary shout as he realized suddenly what was happening to him. Without circulation in his legs, the deadly cold would make two frozen stumps of them. Two lifeless sticks of wood attached to his body by the time they reached shelter.

He released the pressure in his lungs explosively. His breath was an icy vapor in the frigid air. He forced back the panic rising in him. As long as he could feel the needles in his legs he was all right. The danger would start when he couldn't.

He listened to the labored panting of Binnell, tugging at the rope. Staggering back and forth up the mountain side, circling around the twenty foot drifts that lay in their path. They were fools to buck the mountain in a storm. They could still turn back to the timber, and gather great heaps

of firewood, build a shelter of sorts, and hole up. His legs would be safe then, and later, when the storm blew out, they could try again.

Carston moved his legs experimentally. He could still feel the stabbing pain. But for how much longer? He was gambling his legs against the chance that Binnell could save his son's life. Without his help, Binnell would get hopelessly lost—but a man had only one pair of legs.

He shouted hoarsely at Binnell. Twice, before the big man heard him above the whine of the wind. When the latter stopped, he sagged onto the snow. His breathing was ragged and short. His eyes were bloodshot now, under the frosted brows, and his face was lined with the fatigue that borders exhaustion.

Carston put his hands under his armpits to warm them. In the few seconds they'd paused, the wind had already swept a drift of powdered snow a foot high against them. He hunched his neck deeper into his jacket. The collar was stiff and rattled against his chin. He could sense the black, rocky crags of the pass, ahead and above them, but all he could actually see were shadowy blurs, unreal, and a thousand miles away.

He began lifting his legs a few inches up off the sled to start the blood coursing through them again. At first there was no feeling, but after a few minutes he felt the familiar, shooting pains knifing through them. It still wasn't too late. They could coast down the steep slope of mountain they'd come up so slowly, on the ski sled. Once in the timber, they'd be all right.

He managed to light a cigarette against the wind, and sucked the smoke gratefully into his lungs, hoping somehow that he could draw a little warmth from it. He quieted, but he showed no indication of moving. The man was bone tired, Carston knew. They might get to the pass, and they might not. If he played out completely, neither of them would get out alive.

He cupped his hands around his mouth and leaned toward Binnel. "We can still get back to the timber," he shouted. "Build a fire, and wait out the storm."

Binnell looked at him then, his eyes filmed with fatigue. He nodded dully, but didn't answer.

Perversely, Carston had a feeling of disappointment as he looked at the man slumped beside him. He'd admired the man for his gameness, but his real self was showing now. When things got rough, the man wanted to quit. A feeling of anger began to grow in him. If they went back now, he knew he'd be unable to forget Binnel's son. He'd always have the nagging thought in him, that if they'd tried just a little harder . . . made just a little more effort, they might have made it. He felt irritated with himself at this thought. *You're a fool!* he told himself, *You owe this man nothing. What's his boy's life against your own two legs? You'll never fly again if you go on—you'll never walk again . . .*

HE STUDIED the man beside him a long moment. Then he reached over deliberately and slapped Binnell in the face. A hard, stinging blow with his open mitten. Binnell's head jerked up and his eyes held a look of incredulity that changed to anger. He began to get to his feet.

Carston grabbed his arm and pulled him closer. "Doc," he yelled, "your boy's depending on his old man. Do you understand?"

Binnell's red-rimmed eyes showed nothing more than anger as he got up and began pulling the sled again.

The wind clutched and tore at them as they crept up the mountain a foot at a time. Twisting sheets of stinging snow plastered them unmercifully. The pitch was steeper now and Binnell had to stamp his boots into place with each step upward. The new fall of snow lay on top of ice, and their progress was slow, but Binnell kept going doggedly.

Carston felt that they were almost to the top now. The steepness of the grade was familiar. He peered ahead, straining his eyes for some landmark in the heavy snow. If only his sense of direction was right.

Twenty minutes later, they plunged suddenly over the top of the narrow pass, and were sheltered for an instant between the jutting, black rock on either side of them. Binnell stopped and stretched out on the snow, his breathing making high, sobbing sounds as he sucked in the thin air.

Carston realized that he could no longer

feel anything in his legs. He tried moving them about on the sled, hoping for the reassurance of the sharp pains but there was nothing now except numbness. He tried to light a cigarette but his stiff fingers were too clumsy. He gave it up and beat his hands together until he could feel life in them again. He waited until Binnell's breathing had slowed, and he'd rested a few minutes. Then he said. "Doc, we're on top."

Binnell didn't look up. "I'm through," he muttered. "Finished."

Carston felt heavy anger rising in him. This man whining about being finished, when for the first time, they had a chance. He leaned close to Binnell, and each word he spoke was sharp with sarcasm.

"You're not finished," he said. "You're a sniveling quitter! You've sweated off a pound or two of that hog fat on you, and you figure you've done enough. You're yellow! Too yellow to help your own son who's depending on you."

Binnell stared at him, his eyes alive again with anger, and a red, deeper than the cold had made, mottled his face.

"I hate your guts, Carston," he said, "But I'll settle with you later." He got to his feet stiffly. "Which way?"

"Wait," Carston said. "We'll ride the sled down. There's drop-offs on this side, but we'll have to try it."

He watched as Binnell swung the sled around until it faced downhill, and felt him shoving against his back until they started moving. As they gathered speed, he felt the grip of Binnell's hands on his shoulders when he stepped on the sled at the last minute.

The wind was a great rushing sound in Carston's ears. He clutched the doctor's bag, and held it between his legs. It was black dark now, with the thick snow beating into his face, obscuring any vision he might have had. He could feel the weight of Binnell's hands and the grip of his fingers through the jacket as they careened down the mountain.

There were drop-offs ahead of them, Carston knew, sheering off into chasms several hundred feet deep. He closed his eyes. If one of these lay in their path, it would be over in seconds. A breath-taking leap into space before the splitting crash which would grind their bones into slivers. He shuddered and braced himself to keep his balance.

It seemed that they had been plunging down the mountain for hours, but he knew it could have been only minutes since they'd begun their wild ride. Then without warning, their crude sled seemed to fly into space, and he felt himself whirling in mid-air for one, giddy, dizzying instant before the hard-packed snow hit him in the face. Then he was rolling and twisting down the slope, clawing and grabbing for something to hold on to. He came to a jarring halt against an icy drift, and lay there for a minute gasping for air to fill his lungs.

His hands were clenched tightly, one of them still hanging to the doctor's bag. He sat up in the snow and looked around, trying to see some sign of Binnell.

"Doc," he shouted. "Doc!"

But his voice was a thin echo that was swept into nothingness by the wind. He strained his eyes, looking into the dark, swirling snow but could see no trace of Binnell. He lay back, breathing deeply, trying to ignore the tightness he felt in his chest and the sudden dryness of his throat.

After a minute he sat up again. If Binnell were downwind from him there was a chance he could hear him calling. At least it was a chance. He began shouting the doctor's name over and over. He yelled until his voice was a hoarse croaking in his throat, and when he was about ready to give up, he saw something dark moving against the white background of snow. He yelled again, and saw the bulky form of Binnell staggering toward him.

Binnell slumped heavily in the snow

(Continued on page 110)

WHERE VACATIONS AND RAINBOWS MEET—

There Might Be A Pot o' Gold!

For fun—or funds—try a prospecting vacation. For where to go and what to take along, write—

VICTOR SHAW, c/o ASK ADVENTURE

See also page 100 in this issue.

LOST DORY

An Off-the-Trail Novelette

Both wind and wave struck with such force that Christy went headlong over the side. . . .

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By EDMUND GILLIGAN

I LOOKED astern of the *Susan* as she slipped away from us and saw the other dories rise to the crest of a wave and then slide smoothly down into the trough and out of my sight. A burst of sunlight flashed through the light clouds, struck the sea in a pretty dash of green, and then passed over the full sail of our schooner, making it shine snow-white. A flight of gulls flew above her and the sunbeam touched their dark wings. The *Susan* stood on and away and then—

"Now, Sebastian!"

Christy, my dory-mate, made the end of the trawl fast to the anchor and flung it over the side. I slowed my stroke and he began to let the trawl go over, throwing the baited hooks out one by one, each with a clear movement, so that they wouldn't become fouled. Only once did he break the easy movements of his hands and arms, and this was to hold up an empty hook and shake his head reproachfully. I hadn't fixed the bait securely and just to make sure that I should remember my fault he took out two baits, thrust the hook through

one and threw the other at my head. I might have dodged it, but, ever the willing penitent, I shut my eyes and let it smack me full on the face.

Soon we had let out the first skate and then, while I rowed on, he knotted the second to the first and this went on until all our trawls were in the water. At the last, the sixth trawl was bent onto an anchor and its usual buoy.

When these were thrown over, the process had been completed and the scores of baited hooks were sinking down into the larder of the halibut, which, we hoped, were dining on fare less desirable than our herring. I then turned the dory and rowed back along the line of our trawl. From time to time, one of the other dories appeared in the sunlight or rose out of a glitter of spray; and then, beating down the wind, came the *Susan* to pick us all up. The dories came safely aboard and not one untoward chance was reported—a great comfort to us, since this flying set is not an easy task and requires good sealegs and hands to carry out promptly and without error.

It soon came time to haul.

"I feel it in my bones," said Terence, "that this is an end of it. They're feeding all right. I can hear them gobbling up the herring and complaining that there's an iron taste to them this year."

The tide was running strong to windward and the seas were beginning to break, but it seemed wise enough to venture out, even though some harsh gusts began to strike us.

Christy and I set forth to our trawls, after the other dories had been sent over, and we safely hauled the larger part, with fair fishing at first, and then a good strike of three big fish—enough to give us more than a safe load.

We took them in and started back to the vessel, aided by the tide, but the big fish wouldn't lie still and they hawsed up the dory in such a manner that her side was open to the sea. At this moment, a gust of wind struck hard and with it came a huge sea, suddenly rising out of moderate water.

Both wind and wave struck the dory and us at the same time, and with such force that Christy lost his footing and went headlong over the side, but he was fortunately near enough to grasp the gunwale and climb back into her. He was no sooner over than back again.

I tried to trim her down, but his weight and pull, and the weight of the fish shifting toward him, left us in a worse position—so that I was helpless when the next sea, even larger, broke over the dory with such violence that I was flung out.

I seemed to fly through the air, so strong was the blow. I had only time to take a deep breath and to commend my soul to God before the waters closed over me and I sank.

My heart seemed to halt, so intense was the clutch of that Atlantic chill. I spread out my arms and stroked three times quickly, seeking to check the force of my descent, and I kicked with my legs. Soon I lost my swimmer's calm because the dead weight of my sea clothing dragged me downward, hampered the vigor of my strokes.

I saw the greeny deep flow by me. I blew out part of my wind, arched my back and swam again with all my strength, stroking and kicking furiously in that instant.

My great effort halted my plunge, but there was little time left. I blew out the last of my breath, closed my eyes and compelled my right arm to strike out and the fingers, already wrenched free of the encasing mittens, fumbled against a line of the trawl. I laid my left hand above the right and heaved again. Hand over hand I raised my body and its burden and opened my eyes again, eager to see the water breaking. Yet I was not free. In the fourth or fifth grasp of my right hand, one of the hooks caught my forefinger and, before I could feel the danger to my chilled flesh, the barb passed through me.

This was death. A rage seized me. I lifted my left hand again, hauled hard and thrust out my legs, and then I rolled away, giving a desperate pull on my right hand. Thus I tore the hook out, tore it through the flesh. I made two more hauls, hand over hand, and burst into the air.

I roared out, "Christy! Christy! Here I am!"

I saw him then, poised on the thwart, his jacket off, ready to come down after me. He bent over, seized my bloody hand, and tumbled me at his feet.

He ripped a piece from his shirt and bound up my finger. He pulled me to his feet and said, "Bail!"

We went to work again and I bailed swiftly because the dory lay low in the water. I felt no pain, only gladness. I swung my bucket back and forth until we were clear and then lay to the oars until we were alongside the *Susan*. By agreement, no word was said of my peril, and we stayed aboard only long enough to change our clothing, replace our mittens with dry ones, and drink our tea. I bound up my wounded finger and then we rowed off to finish hauling.

By the time we found our buoy and began to take fish again, the wind had gone to north-west, which left the dory leeward of the schooner and meant a hard pull back. But we took all our fish, pulled in the trawls and stowed them without using up all the daylight.

We were still over two miles from the vessel and the wind kept rising—and then, swiftly and with no warning, the snow came on the back of the wind. A hard snow it was, too, bitterly touched with hail. The sky grew dark. The fall of snow increased so quickly that in a quarter of an hour we couldn't see more than a dory length away.

I rowed with a sharp stroke, but he cautioned me to take it easy.

"We could pass under the bowsprit and see nothing of her," I said, striving to peer through the fall. I turned my head the other way and listened. "There!" I cried. "Hear that? 'Tis her horn blowing for us."

"Yes, Sebastian. Where would you say it was blowing from?" He turned the same way and listened. "No, it's not her born. It's the gale blowing up. We'll never hear her horn in this racket."

The heavy dory clambered sluggishly up the wave. Its crest broke over her. The journey down was so swift that I became alarmed and held my oars in deep to steady her.

I said to Christy that the wind had changed again. It had been blowing on my back and now I couldn't tell where it was coming from.

"I can't tell what's happened to the wind!"

He was leaning backward and couldn't hear my voice amid the hissing of the snow. He studied the cargo of halibut and, without a word, flung off three or four into the sea. I knew by this that our situation had become perilous.

He signaled to me that he was going to anchor. He did so and came to my side and gave it as his opinion that it would be best to anchor there until the snow ceased.

"It won't last, Sebastian," he said. "It'll stop soon."

"Yes, Christy, soon. And then we'll see the vessel bearing down on us."

"Yes, and all will be well. She'll show her light and we'll be safe on board before we know it. But we've overloaded a bit and I thought it best to rid ourselves of a few fish. To make it easier."

FOR a while the dory rode easier and once the snow seemed to lighten, but I hardly had time to call him up from bailing before the flakes came whirling at us thicker than ever. The wind gathered flakes and hail and spray, flung them into our faces, and filled the bottom of our dory. The little anchor held her head right and we busied ourselves with our gear, not caring to be idle. Often we looked to leeward, hoping to catch sight of the *Susan's* familiar gleam. No sign showed in the twilight.

Night fell. Little change came in the light around us, because the snowfall had long since shut off the dim rays of the setting sun; yet I knew that night had come because the feeling of loneliness grew in my heart and the howl of the wind came louder, passing in a curve over the face of the waters.

Christy handed me the jar of tea. I drank it. I held out the jar to him so that he might stow it away. I saw that he stared to windward.

He raised his arm and cried, "Look there! She's to windward of us! Now I call that hard luck."

At first I could see nothing, so thickly fell the snow. I gazed where he had pointed and then I saw the light of our vessel rise in the dark and fall. All our rowing and hard work to get to windward of her had been in vain. That task, doubly hard and dangerous because of the night and its rising gale, still lay before us, unless she came down on us by good chance in a search. We watched, in the hope that we might see her move. Her position didn't change. He then said that it would be best to make the effort now, while she lay in

plain sight. I took in the anchor and we lay to the oars again.

I heard him shout a sentence. All that came clear amid that din was, "I must tell—" but the gale came between us and I cried out to him that I hadn't heard all.

He turned, cupped his hands, and shouted, "We are rowing for our lives!"

I had rowed for many things, but not for my life. I put my back into it. I spared nothing, bit deep and pulled hard. I let my right hand know what my left was doing and bade it do better. We had lost a dory length and more in taking up the anchor, and all our strength and skill couldn't push us back to where we started. No, not that much. The sea coursed under us and broke over us. The water in the bottom gained a little with every stroke and the snow fell with such a heavy rush that it alone seemed enough to defeat us. I struck hard with the oars—once, twice, thrice. I shortened the stroke and doubled. Gusts of the gale struck broadside on, then whirled and battered the bow. The dory sank lower and lower.

At last, in desperation, I shouted, "Any headway?"

"Not a fathom! She's just as far away!"

I glanced over my left shoulder and saw no light. I looked the other way and found the warm beacon. We had done nothing

Christy shipped his oars and let go the anchor. Off we fell, whirling rapidly. Soon the anchor took hold and the dory brought up. We began to bail. We went hard at it, because the water was up to our knees and our gear was beginning to work loose and wash about. I took several big fish and flung them over the side. The sea spun them away. I saw their fat, gray sides gleam. Even in that dire moment, I couldn't help thinking that it was a sinful thing to waste such hard-won booty.

By this time, we had lightened the dory considerably. Nevertheless, the force of the sea and the force of the gale put such a strain on her anchor that it began to drag.

Off she went, faster and faster. I jumped to my oars, meaning to keep some order in her flight, if I couldn't stop her. Ice was making now. It lay thick and harsh across the thwart and I had to break it away before I could get a rowing seat. Christy turned to bailing, this being even more needful than rowing to block our wild flight from the schooner.

Night dark and night cold now lay hard hands upon us. Spray turned into rattling icicles that cut my cheeks and forced me to work with eyes half-closed. This new burden of ice drove our little boat deeper and deeper until at last it seemed that she couldn't keep afloat.

He seized the greater part of our gear and flung it into the water. He turned to bailing again, flailed the water out and then let go all but one of our precious halibut. I turned at that moment and saw him a-straddle in the gloom, his face shining pale under the rime on his hat brim. He held the last of our fish in his hands. He didn't throw it. He stowed it up against the kidboard and secured it somehow. He bailed again and I rowed hard. The casting away of the gear and fish put us in better shape and we began to ride easier.

I heard a happy cry from Christy. I looked backward. There, not twenty fathom away, came the *Susan* on her search for us. I saw her hull plainly and dimly made out her sail. There was no mistaking the bright star shining in her rigging. I listened.

Christy cupped his hands and roared: "Ahoy! Ahoy, the schooner!"

I shouted the long "Ahoy!" and then listened. I tried to shut out the scream of the gale and thunderous flow of water so that I might hear her signals, and it seemed to me that I caught the mellow blast of her horn. There was no good in shouting and we had no lantern. We waited. Soon the *Susan* vanished.

He came toward me and said: "She'll be around, Sebastian. The old fox won't lose a dory in a millpond like this."

"Aye! Christy," I replied. "She'll swing around and soon we'll be safe aboard. He won't scold us this time for being greedy."

CHAPTER 2

WE LET the anchor go again. This time it held. Christy and I sat forward to keep her head down and help her behave. We stirred only to pound ice and to bail. Midnight came. Our hope then changed to expectation of dawn, because we knew that it wouldn't be hard to find us, if the gale wore itself out. I broke off a bit of ice from the gunwale and tasted it. I found it

salt and spat it out. I fished around until I put my hand on the tea jug. It had hardly a drop in it and Christy flung it into the sea in disgust. The Boston crackers had turned to sodden dough in my pocket. I ran my fingers into the mess, nevertheless, and stuffed the dough into my mouth. I made him do likewise.

Hour by hour, the northwest gale ran over us. Hour by hour, we fought against it with all the tricks that the Grand Banks years had taught us. Christy knew all the sly ways and cruel ways of the Atlantic and we fended against them. In silence we labored till it was done and a truce gained, and he spoke cheerfully of the fast-waning dark.

When we saw the gray arc in the blackness, he sang out: "We haven't long to wait, Sebastian! Aboard for breakfast, and how I'll like it!"

Daylight came through snow and spray. The wind changed to north-east and tossed the snow to one side for a little while. A hilly sea lifted us so high that we could see far around us. He looked to the north and east. I looked south and west. The sea passed under us and we sank down again. A hopeful glance passed between us. Once more a great sea lifted us and again our eyes swept the horizon. There was no vessel.

I saw Christy's face clearly when the light increased, and he saw mine. In his face, I saw the pinch. His cheeks seemed thin. His brine-encrusted mouth told a tale in silence. I cannot tell what he saw in my face, yet I was sure he read no sign of fear or lack of trust.

"Time to think, Sebastian." He went into the bow and crouched there by himself in poor shelter. I bailed her clear and flung over the odds and ends of our gear. I knew now that every ounce meant a pound for us to carry on the long journey.

He came down to me and said: "No use in lying idle at anchor here, Sebastian. Something's happened to our vessel. Who knows if even one dory got back to her. Maybe she's alone herself, like the *Moonhawk* I told you about. We must up anchor and do."

"Right!" said I cheerfully. "Where to, Christy?"

He looked at me "Newfoundland."

"Others have done it," I replied. "Jeremiah's father and John's uncle together." My heart shook at the memory of their tale. "What one man can do, another may try. How far do you reckon it is to land, Christy boy?"

He looked away at the sea, measured in his mind's eye the heaving billows in their miles, pondered, and replied: "A hundred mile and more, Sebastian. As the crow flies, that is."

"Sure of our course, are we, Christy?"

"Not certain sure, but it's a broad target."

"Sure it is, Christy. We can't miss it very well."

"No food, Sebastian. Remember that."

"My belly tells me so, Christy. But we'll make up for it once we run ashore."

He gave me that close look again and said, "I have never seen a stronger man in all my life or a better pair of hands at the oar ends. All's well between us. Now then, my bucko—row!"

I set to the oars and he drew up the anchor. I began to row. This was early in the morning of our second day and at the end of our first night.

FORWARD I drove the dory in the bleak morning. When we rode over a sea and paused a brief while at the top of our watery world, I gave a short light stroke and pushed her over. In the wild descent, I held the oars free and kept them so until the new ascent began. Then I let go with a will.

'Twas well, yet not well enough. What pair of arms could pierce that gale? Not mine, not mine. I spent myself in that first hour, spent abundantly, and failed. I labored so hard that the freezing pains in my feet ceased and the blood flowed warmly through me. I strove amidst the horns and bugles of the gale, ever hearing on my right and on my left the howl going in a circle; wolfish, as in the wilderness of Saskatchewan by our red fire.

Seas broke on her bow and coursed the gunwales and followed after, leaping in our slow track, racing by, and turning again to leap under the oars. I clenched my hands desperately onto the handles and struck deeper and deeper, yet I struck against the foam one time and the right oar swung wildly.

I fought to keep balance, drove my heels down to firm footing and tried to keep her head on the course. The dory fell off, whirled, blew backwards with the gale, shipped water. In the last moment, I caught hold again and brought her head to the sea. Christy's hand touched me and I saw him hold up the only part of our gear that we had saved: a buoy made of a keg.

He knocked its head in and flung it into the water washing over my boots. He then sat in his place and took up the oars to pitch his Gloucester skill against the storm. I rested a brief while, saw that he too could make no gain, and then added my oars to his. Even this was of no use. Two rowers could not prevail against the sea.

He shouted. "It's no good trying now! Rig a sea anchor. I'll hold her head-on."

I bailed first and then fished out the stern painter. I took my mittens off so that I might throw a sound knot into the painter and let them fall into the water in order to keep them soft. At that instant, a great sea broke over the bow and rushed through the dory. I had barely time to drop the sea-anchor and seize the bucket. Out went the anchor and, as I soon discovered to my sorrow, out went my mittens too. Christy shouted a warning and I bailed as I had never bailed before, for there was as much water in her as she could hold and still float. The anchor gave a sluggish movement to her. A cloud of vapor came softly down and covered us.

The danger passed for the time being. I sat a while until he came to my side and pointed at my hands. The reddish color seemed to be changing to white. They gave me no pain—even the wounded finger felt all right.

"Your hands—ain't they too cold?"

I shook my head. He took the mitten off his left hand and touched my wrist with his bare finger. I shrank from his touch. It sent a barbed pain through me.

He said, "Take these." He pulled off his other mittens, held them out to me.

"No! No!" I said. "I lost mine and must suffer for it. I'll be all right, Christy."

"Take one!"

I shook my head again and sent him back to his place. Yet I was frightened in my soul that we might have to row all alone for that hundred miles and I knew that I couldn't keep my fingers on the handles very long if my hands froze. I considered that I might tear out some part of my inner clothing and wrap my hands in the cloth. This was folly, because the cold was so intense that it would have slain me as with a spear.

I fastened my fingers hard around the handles and rowed while I pondered. I looked fondly at my right hand, gleaming frosty white. I gave it a poor smile, thinking of all the wonderful things it had done for me in play and love and water skills. Fondly I looked, too, at my left, gleaming frosty white. *This is my hand!* I said and a voice replied, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.* Thus the old pagan gave me his interpretation of the thing and I resolved to let my hands freeze where they were, in order that they might be of some service to my friend. I did this, knowing full well that my arms and shoulders and my back would go on and on, even if my hands were insensible and their sinews devoured by the cold. This was a sailor's judgment. I could ask no more of myself at the time.

I curled my fingers around the oars while they were not yet too stiff. Spray ran over them and the sea poured upon them. I sat there without moving until my hands were frozen to the shape of the oars. I saw the crystal brine gleam where the dark flesh had gleamed. I wept a little inwardly. I loved my hands so. I rowed on. I uttered my morning supplication to the Lord Who sitteth upon the flood and to Him I commended the soul of the man by me.

DARK as night, the water ran beneath us. Gray as the stormy sky, the fog drifted over us. The waves, immeasurable in strength, fell against our anchor and against us. In silence, we toiled. Ridges of ice formed on the bow, crept down into the dory. Often the water in the bottom froze before our eyes. Then I would withdraw my hands slowly from their grips and pound the ice with an oar, or I would take the bucket in my fists and bail awkwardly. Often I smashed the ice with my hands, for I could feel no pain or blow through the gauntlets made for me.

In this time, Christy worked in silence or crept into the bow to rest a moment under the scant shelter. I saw that his store of strength waned fast. Yet he spoke manfully, saying: "Stick it out, Sebastian! A vessel will bear down on us. She could see us."

I knew that this was not so. A schooner might have knocked us from our course and not see us, so thick was the vapor and so great the unceasing din of spray and water.

We took in the anchor. All that day we bailed and pounded, pounded and bailed. We could hardly row at all because there was so much to do in order to keep afloat. At noon a glint came through the flowing clouds and I fondly dreamed that the sun might come out of the wrack and bide by us. Soon the glint turned to a bar of deeper darkness and rough hail flashed out of it. I turned my face to the sky and thrust out my raspy tongue, thinking a pellet might strike it and melt there. None did, although the hail lashed at my face.

I bowed my head and rowed on. I spelled Christy at the bailing. Once in every quarter of an hour, as our second day in this desolation came to its close, one of us had to rise and bail. When the new twilight moved across the sea, an immense wave rose over us and filled the dory nearly to the gunwales. It was his turn to bail. He lay in the bow, taking shelter. I turned, in the midst of my struggle with the oars, and saw him huddled there, his arms bent under him, his head bowed.

I shouted: "Jump, Christy! Bail her, Christy boy! Bail her!"

The water dashed over him. I saw his head move weakly and I sprang to his side. He said: "I can't see it. My eyes! Ah, what's this? What's this?"

I lifted his head. His eyes lay closed beneath a skein of frost. He moaned and tried to rise, saying: "The bucket, Sebastian! Put it in my hands! Put it in my hands!"

I soothed him. I held his face up to the meager light and looked upon it. This was a thing I had never seen before. No, nor heard of. I let his head fall gently and I left him to begin the bailing. Having cleared her once again, I returned to him and again lifted his head. His breath came slow. His face turned whiter and whiter as I gazed. Crouched in the bow, I held him in my arms to protect him against the unspeakable cold of the gale. I blew my breath against his eyelids.

He murmured a word that I couldn't hear. I soothed him with words, bade him be of good cheer. He replied: "There's no use, Sebastian! We can't live through the night. 'Tis better to die now than stretch it out." He sobbed and cried out: "My eyes! My eyes!"

This was a hard thing that he said, and I didn't know but what there was some truth in it. I mean, about stretching it out. Yet it was also an undeniable sin. I spoke roughly to him. My words came hastily, because I didn't wish to bear the burden of loneliness, too. I guess that was the way of it. I didn't wish to be alone in that sea, where I hadn't been before.

He moaned. Once he began, he kept moaning and at times there came words of little meaning from his frosty lips. The dory shipped a sea full of fragments of ice. It poured in a harsh stream over his twisted knees. He cried out clearly the name of that woman of Gloucester, for whose sake he had come to his present pass. "Martha!"

I jumped to my feet and bailed. In the midst of this labor, another sea came over, bearing ice, and I saw there was no use in lying down. I had all I could do to keep her free of water. So I resolved to lie down no more. He talked loudly then and I heard him say his own name over and over again. He babbled of green fields. He asked for water and something to eat.

"There's no water," I said, "and there's no food but the fish and that will kill you, Christy."

I took up a piece of ice between my fists and placed it in his mouth. He pushed it out with his tongue and lay silent. He then began to recite a prayer over and over again. He said it in a hasty way and I trembled to hear, knowing that he had seen the vision. "For Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. For Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me". Over and over again, speaking in his childhood rote, for he became a child again, now in the hour of death. "Stay near me, Sebastian. Stay near me." He raised his arms, clashed his icy mittens together and whispered: "Sebastian! Take my mittens. I'm all right now."

I sat down by his side in the bow.

"I'm here, Christy," I said. "Be comforted, Christy boy. 'Tis warmer now." I blew my breath upon his eyes again. I held my breath until the inner warmth of my body warmed it and then I blew upon him. His face lay hidden, turned into the gloom. My hands couldn't feel his cheeks because the blocks of ice encased my fingers.

I blew upon his eyes and said: "Can you see now, Christy? Is that better?"

"Yes, Sebastian." His voice came in a sleepy murmur. "Yes, I can see now."

He died.

I began to cry. Where to, Christy? Where now, my friend—

I LAY there by my noble friend until my own heart roused itself, stirred in its bereavement and loneliness. "Hear my prayer, Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Thy peace at my tears, for I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more."

I watched my chance, and, when the dory lay right, I bent down and took up the body of my companion. I carried him in my arms and laid him in the stern. Jack Frost strewed flowers of spray upon him: yew of ice and a harsh laurel. The dory shipped a sea and the ice began to make on his stiff limbs. I bound him well, because I was resolved that he should lie in the earth and sacred words be said over his heroic head because, in his wandering, he had repeated the words, "Christian burial!"

And I whispered to him, "Christian burial. You're not for the sea, Christy, not for the sea." I made him secure with the stern painter.

I then took off his mittens and tried to put one on my right hand because the wounded finger gave me a new pain, though all else lay numb and painless. I broke away the ice on that hand and blew my breath on it and then I saw that it was swollen so much that the frozen mitten could not pass over. So I soaked it in the water at my feet until it became soft, a thing I had often seen Christy do.

I drew it on again and this time the fingers and the knuckles slid slowly in and this hand found shelter. Such a great boon this seemed! I thanked God most earnestly for my good fortune and I set about the same task with the other mitten. This I also accomplished in the dark of night.

I then went to him again and took off his jacket, for he had no need of it now. I broke the ice off it and went forward to the bow. There I lay down and drew the jacket over my head. I found a sweet relief in this. Thus I shut out part of the cold and the incessant clamor of wind and wave.

I rested. Yes, I rested for many minutes before I had to bail again. Thus the second night passed and the third day of my labor began.

At the break of day, the wind changed into the west and the sea became calmer. I saw the sun rise, watched its dim fire shine through a lattice of green bars and gold. A sea mew flew over my head. The black hue of the water changed to the deep-water blue. Soon, above the arc of the sun, now lifting itself through the yellowish foam, an area of leaf-green grew and flowed brightly to the south and north. One splendid ray of light pierced the gloom overhead.

I rejoiced. I hauled in the sea-anchor, made it secure at Christy's feet, and bailed. I cut a little slice from the chicken halibut and thrust it into my mouth. It sickened me and I spat it out. I cut off a piece of skin from the backbone and chewed on this. The salt seemed to have been worked out of it by the ice. It gave my jaws something to work on.

I then spied a thinner block of ice swimming by, knocking against the dory and broke off a bit. I placed it on my tongue and found that it was pan ice from a river. I couldn't feel it at first. At last, part of it melted and a trickle of sweet water ran down my throat. I shouted in my joy. My thirst, which was like to kill me, broke. My veins leaped with life as if the drink had been a good wine.

"Now, Sebastian!" I said aloud, "There's a chance yet!" The cold turned in my lungs with the chill of steel, but the thought of a river flowing gave me hope.

I sat down to the oars. I found the same difficulty in rowing because my hands were harder than ever and would not bend. There was neither pain nor comfort in them, only awkwardness. At last, I man-

aged to squeeze the curved fingers back onto the handles and then I saw that blood had come through the mittens. I also saw a little bit of the flesh of my right hand come away.

I rowed all that day. To the dull progression of the weary strokes, my soul sat listening. Dipping feebly and not too far, lest the sea deprive me, I made my puny stirs in that vast welter and never knew whether I stayed on a landward course. Over and over again, I forced my shoulders to go forward, raised my arms, forced my shoulders back.

I began to count. I ran the figures before my mind's eye, tried to show a lively interest as the sum neared one hundred; and on the hundredth stroke I eagerly left off rowing and sat down in the bottom of the dory, my back to the wind. I persuaded myself somehow, by some mad angle of reasoning, that this was a proper thing to do, although the wind still blew against me. I thought that it came from northwest, but I wasn't sharp enough to say for sure.

In a little while, I found that the day was done and the moonlight hurt my eyes. I grumbled churlishly against her beauty and said many times aloud: "Wish she'd set. Wish she'd set and have done with it." Yet I could not leave off gazing. My desire to look into that sunny fire became so keen that I even twisted into the wind to give my eyes full satisfaction and full pain.

I fixed my hands to the oars again, rowed on. I counted, too, and because the wind seemed lessening, I resolved to count this time to the two hundredth stroke. I accomplished, one by one, the first half of this labor. At the one hundred and first stroke my heart cried out: "I can no more!"

I ceased to row, lifted my eyes to the moon, for I meant to pray a little to stave off the waning of my strength.

I had no need of prayer. A wondrous thing happened in the moonglade. A flower of flame bloomed in the darkness below the moon, a flower of flame that stiffly shone below the moon and high above the sea. This cold glare came and went like a sunbeam striking a flower of glass and showed me that I had seen a form of ice, fired to a golden hue in that moment.

A shadow fell upon this flower and hid its vast petals, and then a greater darkness passed between me and the moon, robbing the sea of all that lovely light. This darkness swam toward me, rushed over the shimmering radiance of the unbroken water, and cast so thick a pall that I could not even see Christy's white face looking at me from the stern.

I stared at the moon when its glow appeared again, dim and obscure beyond the wall of darkness. This glow increased slowly until, at last, a flash of light, green as the depths of an emerald or of the morning star, stood where I judged the moon itself should be. By all these signs I knew what I was to see. Trembling, I awaited the great emergence. I listened for that never-to-be-forgotten sound of surf above the tumult of the wind and waves. I held out my frozen hand to feel the deadly chill of that majestic presence. I could not hear that rumble nor feel the greater cold. Yet I was sure.

"Christy," I said to that silent form, "a guide is coming to show us the way."

CHAPTER 3

A WIND sped under the moon, split the flow of clouds, and made a vast area of clear dark-blue sky, where a star gleamed clearly and then vanished when the moonfire outshone the lesser gleam. It had been long since I last saw a star and my heart cheered, even in its amazement.

The moonlight rushed toward me, even as the darkness had come before, and the whole world turned to a rousing glow. Into this glory of calm light there now came, in the sublime pace of yore, the first outpost of the wandering berg—a black headland, whereon breakers climbed and threw up jets and fountains of sparkling spray. Next there came an immense battlement, a glittering, yellow tower that thrust itself halfway up the face of the moon.

I sat to the oars. I worked my hands again until they slid onto the handles. I made my supplication and struck hard. I made five strokes and turned toward that monument, a pillar of fire east of the moon. I rowed five more strokes and turned, five more and turned again; and then I saw the obelisk move towering on until it lay athwart the moon itself, and the cloud-high column took to itself all that glorious light, turned itself into a column of molten gold.

I saw the course it took and I lay mine with it. I rowed the hundred strokes and the two hundred. The moon set and darkness came again over all that country of ice. I rowed on. The snow came and covered Christy, and the flakes drifted over my boots. I would not cease from rowing. The pain in my feet grew again until I had hard to keep from crying out. Even this pain drove me on, for I knew that a body which could yet suffer had much life left in it.

All night I rowed. Twice I stopped and sat in the bottom of the dory and there bowed back and forth, back and forth, to keep from freezing, even in that defended spot. All night long I rowed in stormy darkness. When daylight came, I saw an island amidst breakers to the north.

I rowed past this island because I saw no sign of man upon it, and I struck harder blows, knowing that the mainland couldn't be far off. I then changed my course so that I ran between the island and the mainland. It seemed to me that if my strength gave out I should be able to steer the dory down upon the shore of the island.

At high noon, with the sun barely in sight, I rose to my feet and looked into the north. I saw the land! I went back to the oars once again and drove onward, resolved not to cease this time until I felt the pebbles of that distant shore roll under the dory's thrust. Often I looked backward, peering under the icicles on my hat-brim. Some hours later, I looked to the east and discovered that I had run past a headland. I looked to the west and saw another spur of ice-bound land. I looked down into the water streaming by the dory. Fragments of the ice I had found before now floated there. I fished one of these fragments aboard with an oar and kicked off a bit with my foot. I leaned down and caught it in my teeth. Its taste was good. This was ice from a spring far inland and I exulted in my victory. I ground the ice between my teeth and let it melt. I drank down the liquor with great joy.

"Sebastian!" I said, "You have won! A river mouth!"

I then felt the thrust of the river current setting against me. I shortened my stroke and doubled the time. I knew that this was the last mile, the last knot I had to make. Land rose in barren hills about me. Great clouds of snow whirled down from the hills and drove across the river. I dared not look up from my oars, fearing I might make an error that would set me drifting in that seaward current, a death to be died in the night at sea. Once the right oar slipped. I missed the stroke. The dory swung around, but I back-watered, seized the oar again and swung her back onto the course.

I HEARD a shout. I looked to the eastern shore and saw only the dancing hills of snow and one bare, black tree. I looked to the western shore and, in the slow turn of my head, I heard the brave music of that shout again. A man stood on the shore. Beyond him, there was a cabin, half-buried in a drift. Another man hurried lamely from the cabin to the shore. He stumbled, fell into the drifts, struggled slowly to his knees, rested, and then stood up. He came on at a straggler's pace. These men were dressed in black and their heads were bowed. I rowed ten fathoms above them and then turned. I let the dory come down toward them and I edged her to the shore.

I sang out: "Ahoy there. A lost dory-man and his mate!"

One of them answered with words I couldn't understand. I expected that they would dash into the water to lay hold of the dory, and when they didn't move to do this I sang out again.

"Lively now, boys! Take hold of her! I can't row!"

By this time, the dory floated hardly a length away from them. I could see their faces. By my soul! I will never forget them! Never! Nor cease praying for them. They were starving men. I saw, in that terrifying instant, that they were father and son, or brother and brother. Famine had carved the same gashes, cuts and hollows in each face, had struck them off with the one dreadful die.

They tried to speak, but they couldn't make the noise I had heard before. I cried to them in the name of God to seize the dory. The one who stumbled on the land now stepped weakly into the water while the dory came whirling on. His companion valiantly thrust out his hand to catch the oar. I leaned on it to bring up the blade, but it slipped through his bony fingers.

Then the other fellow fell headlong into the stream. In despair, his companion flung up his hands, turned, grasped his companion by the arms and began to drag him out of the water, holding his face upward in a look of agony as he strained backward. The current drove the dory off from the shore. I cried out and fell down at Christy's feet. The sea-anchor struck my forehead. I lifted myself to my knees and, with the last of all the strength that God had given me, I flung it over the side. This was of no avail. The dory ran lightly outward on the current. Soon I heard the breakers, soon I heard the Atlantic pouring once more under the bow.

In my despair, I lay long in the bottom of the dory. I opened my eyes at times and saw the gray light of waning day fall upon the snow that drifted against my cheek. Night came on swiftly. With it came a greater cold, so fierce that pains in my hands and feet ceased and numbness crept over them.

"I won't be long alive now," I whispered to myself. "Not long. Not long."

I wept again, sobbed like a child. It seemed so hard to me that I should have come so far and, in the end, be unable to bury my comrade according to his Christian wishes, or hear for myself, as I lay dying, a human accent raised in prayer for my soul. I wished not to hear in my last hour this Atlantic voice, laying its mighty curse on the dignity of man. My heart attended to my woe; anger came slowly into its recesses, once so gay, once ringing with the songs of love and of blue, far seas and flowered islands.

MY HEART stirred, bade my body to rise. I sat to the oars. I rowed seven strokes against the drag-anchor, then drew it in and I rowed with the tide until I saw the bleak shores and the wooded hills of the island which I had passed on my inward voyage.

I drove straight for the shore, then held her off until I saw a break in the surf. Through this I dashed and once more beheld solid land about me, headlands of a little bay. I entered and saw the tumbled stones of a little wharf upon the shore. Above it lay a wreck of timbers, where fishermen once had been. I rowed the dory straight into this place and made the bow painter fast to the ruin. I arose and bade my companion to rest yet a little while before I entombed him in the face of the earth.

I crept out against the wind, seeking to drive my feet down through the snow to the earth. I turned my back on the sea. I crouched in the twilight by the lee of a great stone and thrust my icy mittens under my jacket and against my belly. I held them there until the pains began again in my hands and I once more found comfort in this and said: "They may yet be saved."

I then wandered forth and in the evening I came to a house, a ruined cabin, slouched on the windy plain. First, before I saw the house, I saw a shadow in my path, a shadow on the snow. I looked up and I saw the half-gone roof and naked boards. I let my head go down into the rime of my jacket collar and closed my eyes in order that they might not betray me with false delight. Thought I: "Wait a bit, good Sebastian. Keep your heart out of this, my huckleberry. Here's a mirage for you. Mirage of the land."

Obediently, I tarried a while, letting the wind search my heart. Keen as briers, sharp as thorns, this searching; and by the north wind, too, whom I had loved. Now his deep thrust was like to slay me where I stood, sinking into the snow. He came out of this cabin and bellowed, a Bull of Bashan, and bade me retreat now from his domain. I would not yield to him. I opened my eyes and stared down at the shadows of the naked boards. I put out my right foot until it broke the splintered line of the shadow and with joy I saw the shadow fall upon my glittering boot. I pushed forward my other foot and then dared to look at this habitation.

I cried out: "Halloo! Ahoy, the cabin! Anybody at home?"

I waited in silence. I lurched forward. Three times I forced my knees to rise upward. Three times I flung my lagging feet forward and then I fell headlong. I beat against the snow, fearing it would smother me. I turned my face to the sky and breathed a while; then I crawled onward and flung myself against the door. There was none. I fell full length across the threshold, rolled over and rested, quite content. I found it rather comfortable. I sup-

pose I was no longer in my right mind.

I giggled like a schoolgirl and said aloud: "A bit stuffy, ain't it, Sebastian?" I fell asleep.

I awoke refreshed. I stood up in the gloom. The wind had fallen off; the snow also had ceased. A dry moon rose and shed a gentle glow upon the desolate land. By this light, I examined my quarters. There were two rooms, the one I had slept in and a larger one. To enter this second one, I had to break a well-latched door.

The door, however, was all that had held together. The snow lay knee-deep in that room. I searched it, thinking there might be a morsel of food or rainwater, but there was nothing, except a ruined net, fish lines on a broken reel, and a lot of Canadian hooks frozen in a lump of tallow, too hard for my teeth.

In one corner of this room, I found a tub of brine. In it were two cod, which had been well-preserved. I took these out and flung them into the snow on the floor, thinking that they might thus be freshened, for I had hopes of making a fire in that place. I also found some loose boards. One of these I split with my boot and then wrapped the net around the end of it, making a sort of broom, which I held between my icy fists.

With this device, I swept out the snow, I lay down again in the corner and closed my eyes for a little while, but my body trembled and my teeth chattered out such a lively tune that I couldn't rest again—besides, my hunger and my thirst were great. I arose, therefore, and determined to make a fire at once in order to melt the ice and snow and boil a piece of fish. There were matches, I knew, inside my shirt and there was wood enough. I lacked only a stove or a hearth and a pot. I searched high and low, found nothing. I swept away the drifts near the house and ran my mittens over the lumps that I overturned, thinking there might be an earth dish, broken and flung aside. It was in vain.

"I'll set fire to the house," I said. "I'll drink the melting snow and I'll roast a bit of fish. Should the owners come—and I hope they will—I've gold to pay them."

I set about this business at midnight. It was not foolhardy, thus to destroy a shelter, if it could be called such. The fishermen had abandoned it at the end of the cod season. As for myself, I now regarded the cabin as a trap. A sleep in it without a fire might have been a long one.

I resolved to burn it first on the lee side, so that a rising wind might not make too brisk a flame. At one side, I built a runnel of snow and ice and at that point I piled up the snow so that it would melt and let the water run down. I thrust a stick through each fish and then I bethought me of the halibut in our dory.

Thinking this would be safer and tastier, I turned and made my way back to the wharf.

Alas! my weakness had led me into an unseamanlike error. I should have made the dory fast at both ends. Now I saw that the plug had been knocked out of her and the oars and thwarts had floated out of her. She lay deep in the water. Christy's body lay there, held by the lashings. The halibut had been fortunately caught in the tangle of the sea-anchor. I dragged Christy to the shore and cast the fish, frozen rock-hard, into the snow.

I FOUND the oars and one of the thwarts floating under the wharf. These I took out, although I had hard work to do it, groping about by the scant light of the moon. The dory had suffered somewhat, because the tide had knocked it against a flat rock there, but I managed to right it, and, after a long search, came upon the plug and restored it.

I then grew so weak that I couldn't use my fists any more. I rested and then searched out the gaff. I thrust the hook into Christy's boot and dragged him along the drifts to a place into which I had almost fallen, a depth of three fathoms of water between the shore and the flat rock. This formed a quiet pool. I thrust his body into this pool, thinking that he would be safe there until I could come back and give him the ritual he had requested when he lay dying.

I managed to get a turn of the painter around one of the timbers of the wharf and then pulled the dory nearer to the rock. I ventured into the water and waited until the bow swung toward me. I seized the bow painter and got a turn of that around another timber. All this was necessary, because I had seen no sign yet that made escape by land a certain thing and I needed

the sea as a last avenue, though hated, hated.

Leaving these matters thus righted, I returned with the halibut to the cabin and entered the swept room. I got out my knife and scraped off a few chips from the wall. This task took me a wretched time, because my hands were worse off than ever and my legs were so far gone that at last I did the work on my knees.

I broke off a few larger pieces of wood and carefully piled my fire. I chipped off a bit of the frozen tallow and added this to the splinters. I then found that the condition of my hands made it impossible for me to take out the matches. Had I done so, I should have been unable to button my clothing again, especially my jacket, and thus I would have encountered the last blow of the cold which, I feared, could not be far off.

"There's no help for it, Sebastian," said I in as cheerful a tone as I could muster. "Ye must go to sea again."

I took up the gaff again and dragged the body of my companion out of its refuge, laid it on the icy shore. I then decided that it would be better, since I didn't have far to go to determine my fate, that I should leave him there in the water. He was safe. So I sank him once more in the pool. I turned my back on his countenance, half-seen in the greeny deep, and again I made the dory ready for sea, intending to run her before the wind and pass all the way around the island.

I began to row. By now my head lay fixed in the collar frost around my shoulders and I had no power to move it. A shroud of ice encased my neck. I knew my course, had no need of steering about, and set to it. I hadn't made four strokes before the dory brought up sharply.

"Ah!" I thought, "I've gone aground."

I gave another feeble stroke, then summoned all my little strength for the last pull. I couldn't budge it. So, for a while, I sat, my eyes staring down into the puddle at my feet, pondering on this new reverse. I lifted my head as much as I could and then I discovered that I hadn't cast off the stern painter. I laughed miserably, crawled forward and tried to haul the dory back with my hands. This, too, proved too arduous a task and I, at length, had recourse to my teeth. I took hold of the painter in this way, reared back and then seized the line between the icy blocks of my mittens. I reached forward again with my teeth and sank them into the briny drip and again drew my head back slowly and again pressed my mittens on the line.

The sun was well up before I thus forced the dory back under the wharf and loosened the knot. I then rode clear and passed out into the open sea. There I encountered much ice and a slow current. Nevertheless, I began my circuit of the island. I ran toward the sun and soon rounded the headland. Seeing it now in back of me, I stood up in the dory and managed a sight of the land. On the rise of a hill, where a few hemlocks stood, their green boughs weighted with glittering frost, I saw a strange dwelling. At first I thought it must be the wreck of a great sailing vessel, for a great mast stood in the midst. I then spied a thin rise of smoke flowing from the timbers. It would have escaped me entirely had it not blown across the dark branches of a tree beyond.

"Those people are burning coals," I said.

I kept staring at this welcome sight until I heard a shout. I forced my head to swing to the left. I saw two men standing beyond the surf. One took a few steps toward the water and eagerly signaled to me. I held up my hand and started to row again.

"Coals!" I whispered, and let drive straight through the surf.

I missed the first roller. When the second rose under the dory, I gave two sharp strokes. The dory flew toward the shore at a speed fit to stove her in if a rock raised in the way. This effort left me all tuckered out. I knew that I was done for, unless those people on shore proved to be a livelier breed than the last I had seen upon the mainland. The oars sagged and pulled and went free of my stiff grasp. I cared not a tinker's dam; for I was resolved to be taken from the water this time, if not in one way, then in another. I rolled over, thrust my knees under me, and stood up. I threw up both my hands to give them proof that the deed was up to them.

A strange thing: they wore uniform coats, long thick, woolen garments, with elegant brass buttons and I said to myself in a fine humorous vein, considering the circumstances: "What! Have I come all the way for this? To fall into the hands of Her Majesty's men?"

The man who had signaled to me was the first to see the exact nature of my plight and the need of precise, daring action. He spoke in that same, eager boyish fashion to his mate, but the other, an older and heavier man, shook his head and, in a hopeless way, pointed to the surf breaking at their feet. He flung up his hands.

The other, giving him the deaf ear, ran into the surf up to his waist and stood valiantly in that torrent, awaiting the inward dash of the dory. Hard work he had, the hero, to keep himself upright in that rough wash. His action was too good an example for the older man, a scrawny, dark-bearded fellow, who now turned toward the dwelling, uttered a useless shout that came only to me, and then ran into the surf.

I cried out in dismay when he fell headlong into the water and I feared that these, too, had been struck by the famine of the coast and I wondered if this brave man near me lacked the strength to perform the task his courageous heart demanded of him.

I LOOKED into that staring face, saw it clearly while the dory ran onward. I became sure of his strength and skill and I threw up my right hand and nodded calmly in the clamoring rush. Calmly, too, he nodded and I saw a look of high firmness set the thin lips straighter still and suck in the famished cheeks.

The dory faltered. I put one foot on the thwart and waited until I made sure the boat would go no nearer to my rescuer. Once more I flung up my hand weakly in a signal that I meant to drive toward him. He smiled. Foam rippled out from under the dory. It paused and began to fall back.

I shouted in a terrible voice. "Stand by, sailor!"

For his answer, he took another step deeper into that thundering flood and raised his hands, showing them ready for the task.

I brought up my other boot, filled my lungs with air, and then hurled myself into the foam. I struck the water heavily, waited until I sank a bit, and then thrust out with arms and legs. I heard a noise, ringing clear like the scream of a cheated gull, and then a hand seized me by the head. Another struck hard at my neck and then slid down swiftly to my arm.

I lay easy and waited for the struggle he had to make. He heaved me to windward, thrust his shoulder down, and began to push me before him, inch by inch, slow step by slow step. Presently he stopped and cleverly brought my head up. I breathed and sank back into the water, so that I might float a little and thus help him. Once more that fierce cry rang above the clamor of the sea and wind, this time with a note of triumph.

My feet dragged on the ice of the shore. He let me turn until I could bring my knees to bear upon the bottom. He staggered forward upon the bottom. I rose to my feet, took one long stride with him, and then fainted in his grasp. In the last moment of my consciousness, I felt the sweet, snowy embrace of our earth again.

CHAPTER 4

I AWOKE an hour later, or thereabouts. I had no memory then of what had passed. My memory had had enough and to spare. I lay in the cabin of a great ship, so it seemed, lay flung out upon a soft bed, set under a porthole. Old habit turned my gaze, half-blind though it was, toward the weather and, in my delirium, I saw spray and hail rise and beat against the great globe of glass above me.

I remember that I set myself alert to feel for the roll and pitch of the vessel and to see how she was handled, for these were perilous waters, famed in Gloucester and Newfoundland for great losses of ships and sailors and passengers. I lay long in this dream, sank once or twice beyond the dream into the darkness whence I had come, and then began to breathe calmly.

I lay naked. No pain came to me. I didn't feel the warmth of the cabin, nor was I aware of past peril. I then remembered the coil and burden of ice upon my back and said to myself that it would be well to know if this had gone away. I moved my head and my neck bent easily. Made happy by this knowledge, I turned my head to the right and then my eyes, becoming a little accustomed to the gloom and the warmth, feasted on the rich furnishings of that place. Panels of dark walnut reached almost to the ceiling and from the main beam of the ceiling there depended gleaming candelabra of silver, hung on silver links, each one of which shot out dull beams of light.

I let my eyes linger long on that lovely haze. I slept and dreamed a dream of home.

I awoke and saw that the candles had burned a full inch and, again with no pain except the numbness, I resumed rapt gazing and turned a little more toward the other source of flame and light—the fire of coals. Now, indeed, my wonderment increased because, in the slow, delighted passage of my eyes, I encountered three ship's compasses set side by side against the dark wood of the farther wall.

A great rug lay before this chair. It was made of well-woven wool, wine-colored. Wrought in it by threads of gold and crimson silk, there gleamed a design similar to the markings of the chest. Again, in the open space between that kingly chair and the hearth, there lay another rug, still larger, and all of one glorious hue, a blue shade, even richer than the ruby color of the first one. On this second rug there stood a table of mahogany which bore two singular objects: a golden-barred bird cage (where no bird sang) and a rude earthenware dish, full of some dun-colored liquid.

This common dish struck me as being all the more queer because it lay next to a gleaming tea service of majestic silver, ornamented with golden lovebirds. There were many pieces; how many I cannot quite remember, but lordly, lordly, they stood there; and I prepared myself (in my half-dreams) for the deft entrance of a steward, bearing hot water and tea leaves to furnish my first repast since last I emptied the cold tea-bottle when our fate unrolled.

There, too, my fond eyes lingered while my thirst, provoked by dreams, choked my heart and my belly raged in its desire for meat. My eyes could no longer tarry upon these reminders of the halls of home and I explored beyond the quiet pool of the burnished tables, full of stars and candlelight, until I looked, at last, at the fraternity of our fire, a beauteous thing of sea coals.

A door to the left of the fireplace opened. A child cried fretfully. At first I could see nothing in the doorway, because my eyes were tired and I suffered again. I closed them to combat a sickness that tormented my belly. I heard a voice speak and another answer. A woman, whose cracked, shrill tone described her age, cried out a long sentence that I couldn't understand.

A hand touched my head and a voice, seeming to speak from far away, uttered a word. I gave no reply. I could not. I knew the words to be English, yet I couldn't solve their meaning and my memory, striving to run the race back to Fortune Bay and the accent of old Nicholas, furnished me at once with the voice of my dead dory-mate and I knew that he lay dead and I groaned for him.

I said in the sweet dusk: "Captain, have you brought my dory-mate aboard? If so, have your men bring him by here, then give him a Christian sailor's burial, for that was his last desire."

A hand touched my harsh lips. Firmly the deft fingers parted the flesh and a voice soothed me in gentle sentences, repeated over and over, until at last I heard clearly: "My poor dear man! My poor dear man!" as I had heard before by the brook of the willows.

The fingers held my parched lips apart and a trickle—nay! a drop—of liquid fell into the furnace of my mouth, fell and ceased. I lifted my hand to open my lips for more. Another's hand gently seized mine, held it down. The water coursed in drain of fire across my tongue, dried in my throat. I retched and convulsions seized my belly.

I heard a man's deep voice say mournfully: "He is dying."

An answer came; I know not what, yet spoken in that soft voice of my comforter.

I cried out: "More! Give me more! My thirst! My thirst!"

"No," said the gentle voice, "no more, my poor dear. 'Twill kill you. Wait a little. Wait a little."

I waited and at the end of a little time I said, "Have you taken my dory-mate aboard? Have you found him?"

"He wasn't in the dory," said a voice.

I gave up speaking and passed into a feverish slumber, wherein dreams came—and this time I dreamed of a white halibut swimming up the sky and of four figures in white hoods and four white hoods without figures.

ONCE more the fingers pried apart my lips and let in a trickle of water. This second drink did me good. I took care not to ask for more. The two men lifted me from the bed and I then saw an old woman pouring

cold water into three tubs, one large and two small.

These were placed near the fire, but my rescuer found fault with this position and moved them farther from the heat, which would have warmed me too quickly. The larger bucket was placed in front of the lordly chair and the smaller two were placed on stools on either side of the chair. These two men lifted me, or tried to, but their strength was not equal to the burden and I had to set my bare feet on the rug, a thing I didn't relish because my feet were far gone.

I sat down in the chair and they put my feet into the bucket and my hands into their buckets. Then, into each of the buckets, they poured coarse salt from a sack, making a brine strong enough to cure herring.

Soon this brine began to draw the frost out of my feet and hands. Thus began the true pain of frost-bite. Had they been fiends, drawing red-hot wires through my flesh, the suffering could not have been greater. I strove hard to keep the tears from my eyes, for these, I knew, were good people and I had no wish to cause unhappiness among them.

I shut my eyes, thrust my head back against the chair, and stayed so until the sweat of my agony came out upon my brow and trickled down. My breath came and went quickly, then came slowly and my heart seemed once to falter. That voice murmured again near me. "My poor dear man!" Again the fingers pried open my lips and again a trickle of water came to help me in my need.

"How long must this go on?" I whispered.

A hand touched my head and the voice answered, "An hour. You are so frozen that you stay a full hour. It is half gone. Be patient. 'Twill save you, perhaps."

I strove hard not to take out my hands. The pain in them seemed far greater than in my feet. Only once did I feel so keen a piercing in my wounded finger that I couldn't bear it and I began to lift it out of the brine. That watchful one held my wrist and wouldn't let me go. In time, this came to its end and they laid me once more on the bed, where the old woman came with the earthenware dish from the table. The stuff in it was a mixture of fish oil and flour.

My rescuer, whose face kept flashing clearly before me and then faded as my eyes grew dim, made a poultice of this stuff and wrapped my hands and feet in swathes of fine linen taken from one of the chests. I was next fed two spoonfuls of a strong liquid, made of herbs. Having done this, I was left be and composed myself to sleep, but I couldn't close my eyes until long after midnight. I talked aloud in a delirium that waxed and waned. Twice the fire was replenished and often some person came and sat by me for a time. Once in every hour, fingers held my lips apart and poured in drops of liquid.

The morning came. The trio returned and gave me more water, this time half a cup. When I had swallowed this, the woman gave me some spoonfuls of gruel. I kept this on my stomach well enough. They waited to see that this was so, then lifted me from the bed and carried me to a bench placed in front of the fire. I heard children crying again on this day and I think it was then that I learned (clearly, at least, for I may have been told before in my fever) that I wasn't aboard a ship, but on an island off the Newfoundland coast. I can't say who it was who told me or why; I guess that some remark of mine concerning our course brought forth the answer.

This I do know for a well-remembered fact—that there began on this day, because of the thing that I am now about to tell, a terrible desire on my part to go home. Not to Gloucester, but to Piety Corner, where there were no half loaves.

Well then, I sat in front of the fire and the older man said, "Hold up your right hand, my dear man."

I did so and he began to unwrap the folds of linen. He paused in the midst of his task and said: "Are ye strong? Can ye stand it?"

I told him that I could stand anything, if it came amidst such warmth.

He unfolded more of the cloth and I gazed at my good right hand as he freed it of its bindings. A movement to the left caught my eye. I saw that the old woman had flung her apron over her face.

"Think nothing of it, madam," I said.

However, she wouldn't take down her apron. Her hands trembled.

At this moment, the man gently put down my hand and turned away, murmuring to

himself. I anxiously watched him by the dim light of the coals because their agitation had communicated itself to me.

"Get on with it, my good sir!" I said and tried to smile, doing poorly at it because my sickness increased and I grew faint.

"I cannot!" he said.

Therefore, my rescuer, who had stood silently in the shadow of the hearth, stepped forward and resolutely took up my right hand. I heard a murmur and thin hands rested a moment gently upon me. Then I saw the linen unwrapped, and my little finger fall off into the rolls of cloth. I looked dumbly upward and clung with my gaze to the gaze of those strange, sea-green eyes, those Buddha eyes, which beseeched me to stand by in good order. I shut my eyes, let my head droop a little.

"The others?" I whispered.

"We'll save those—" in a whisper faint as mine—"but you'll never fish again."

I OPENED my eyes. I saw that the skin of the other fingers had split in places. The hurts were clean, however, owing to the power of the curing salt. Even the finger that the fish-hook had gashed was all right. Yet some dead parts lay here and there and these had to be taken away to keep me from poisoning.

My rescuer turned to the table, moved the candles nearer, and took up a pair of silver scissors.

I said, "Please don't cut my other fingers off."

"Dear man, I will not. I'll clear them and in eight days they'll heal. So close your poor eyes and trust to me."

This I did. Well for me that I could. My rescuer had no choice, and once I heard a groan and a whisper. Soon the work was finished and a tender, joyful voice told me that not one of these fingers had to be lost.

"You're a brave man," said I, "and a good, noble one to help the stranger so."

"I'm not a man," said my rescuer. "I am a woman."

"Steady so!" I whispered and tried to catch hold of myself, but the sickness, coupled with this revelation, struck me hard amidships and I keeled over, sprawled out on the bench. I lay thus only a little time, keeping my left hand free, but my rescuer calmly heaved me to my seat and simply said: "I'm not a man. I'm a woman. I'm the daughter of that man." These words, too, came in the curious accent of the Newfoundlanders of that coast and I had trouble at first in understanding, but I soon learned. Also I know that when they conversed with strangers they made a special effort to speak as the stranger spoke.

I looked down at those hands, then, and knew them to be the hands of a woman and I looked up into the strange, sorrowing eyes and I knew that they were the eyes of a woman.

"Twice in your fever," she said, in a calm, low voice, meant to interest me while she worked, "you spoke to me as I sat by you at night. Once you called me by an odd, foreign name. And then, when you were better, you called me 'Captain' and 'Skipper' and bade me take aboard your dory-mate. Where may he be, your dory-mate?"

"My dory-mate," said I, "is safe enough, madam. He lies in four fathoms of water by the flat rock under the wharf yonder."

"This will be Christy that you called upon in your fever?"

"That was his name."

"I'm sorry for you that you lost your dory-mate."

I stayed silent and then I said, "This is no work for a woman, cutting the dead flesh from a half-dead man! Go out, therefore, and send in a man to do this thing."

SHE knelt before me and took up my right foot. She began to unwrap the folds of linen and, in so doing, she began again in her clever tone and told me of the distress of the island, saying that there was little food for the women and children and less for the men, because the winter already had held them cut off from the mainland for many weeks. Three men, who had gone to the mainland for supplies, had not been able to return and no one knew whether they still lived.

And she revealed to me, as she undid the cloths, the secret of her dress and of the strange apartment in which I lay and she showed me also the cause of that antique air which lay upon the rich furnishings. This island had been in the past a scene of many shipwrecks and once, in her childhood days, a winter storm had cast a great

ship upon those rocky shores in the night; and in the morning her father had gone out under a blue sky and had found hundreds of bodies lying in a vast sorrowful ring around the island. Again, he had once set forth in a boat and had taken one hundred and thirty men, women and children off a ship from Ireland that had run upon the rocks. Aye! and he had fed them, too, until they were carried away by the government people.

"All these things," she said, "come from the wrecks of vessels and our garments come from their broken chests and those we saved sound. Those that are not broken are kept safe by my father against the day the owners come for them. For he believes they will come to take away the precious things. So we use only what we must."

Thus, while she murmured at my feet, she prepared the ointment and unwrapped the bindings from my feet, first, the right, which was whole (as I knew it would be because of its fierce and constant pain) and then the left, which had been in the days of my voyage in the dory, and now showed its loss. I didn't look down. I kept my eyes fixed on the fire until I felt her hands pour on the soothing ointment and then I turned to her and said: "Is my right foot whole, ma'am?"

And she said it was and that it would heal in good time.

I then said, "Is my left foot whole, too?" and she shook her head and turned away so that I might not see her tears.

It was true, indeed, this matter of my left foot. The second toe had gone the way of the little finger and I went back to bed a maimed man. At first, I stretched out in sorrow for myself and didn't wish to live any longer and I bewailed my folly in making the trip.

And then, turning carefully between the sheets of good linen, I saw my rescuer bowed before the fire, the trousered legs thrust apart in a deck pose, the cropped head bent in thoughtful attitude, the saving hands joined together.

In silence, I thought.

And I knew that I had been saved by those clasped hands and had been nursed from death by them and would be made whole again in good time, except for the things that were separated from me, and I said to myself, "Count yourself lucky, Sebastian."

So I fell asleep.

EXECUTOR

THE execution elephant of King Mindoon of Burma (before the British) would catch the criminals turned over to it for execution and would throw them into the air and impale them upon its tusks as they came down. If it missed spitting the man it would hold him down with its trunk and quietly step on his head, crushing it like a coconut.

A gruesome story about this elephant is that when Supayalat, King Thebaw's queen, immortalized by Kipling, persuaded Thebaw to sign the order for the execution of his seventy-odd brothers, on the ground that they were a menace to his throne, they were turned into the execution pen that same night, and the elephant went on a mad orgy, trumpeting and screaming around the walled enclosure, as he crushed his helpless victims.

By morning Thebaw had repented of his order—to which he had been driven by the queen and her mother—and he rescinded it. But Supayalat, knowing her husband, had craftily put the order through for immediate execution.

Thebaw, in repentance, summoned his priests and asked them what he might do to assuage his soul, and they told him that the noblest thing a man could do upon this earth was to endow in perpetuity a monastery for the support of priests.

So Thebaw built a wonderful monastery of carved teak wood and gold leaf to house exactly the same number of priests as the brothers who had been killed. And there in Mandalay the monastery stands today. —*From the Files of Ask Adventure.*

Information you can't get elsewhere.

ASK ADVENTURE

THE best way to eat a pig.

We are a small village in northern Ontario and this summer we are putting on a fair to raise funds for the local Red Cross.

A pig has been donated for a barbeque, but none of us knows how to go about cooking the animal. We would be very thankful for a few tips on the procedure. I hope you can help us out.

A. M. Stratford,
Missanabie, Ont.

Reply by Paul M. Fink: There are many ways of barbecuing an animal and no doubt some cooks will disagree with this method, but it is one I have used successfully.

Dig a pit some eighteen inches deep, three feet wide and long enough for the amount of meat you have. In this build a fire of dry hardwood, and keep it going until you have about four inches of glowing coals in the bottom. Across the pit lay several heavy iron rods or lengths of old pipe and on top that a piece of woven wire fencing.

In the meantime cut the pig into pieces of about ten pounds each. This is easier than trying to cook the whole carcass in one piece, and being in smaller pieces the meat will cook more quickly and evenly.

Place the meat on the grating over the coals and allow to cook slowly. In one commercial barbecue pit I saw in North Carolina last year, the cooking meat was covered with a length of metal roofing, to hold in the heat and cook it on both sides at the same time. Better keep a hardwood fire going at one side, to be able to replenish the hot coals as they burn out. Don't put fresh wood on the coals under the meat.

As the meat cooks, baste it from time to time with barbecue sauce, using a rag on a stick for a mop. There are as many sauces as there are barbecue cooks, each one of whom will fiercely contend that his and his alone is a worldbeater. However, they are all basically about the same.

Here is a very good one:

Melt a half pound butter and to it add 1 cup vinegar, half cup tomato catsup, two tablespoons Worcestershire sauce. While this is coming to a boil, mix one tablespoon dry mustard, ¼ cup sugar, and add, together with two grated onions and one garlic clove. Simmer for fifteen minutes and keep warm as you baste. This will serve for about ten pounds of meat.

Another, warmer one, calls for a cup of olive oil, and half cup vinegar, small can of tomatoes or bottle of tomato catsup, one chopped onion and two garlic cloves, two tablespoons chile powder, one teaspoon black pepper and one tablespoon salt. Brown the onion and garlic slightly in some of the oil, then add the other ingredients, together with a couple of cups of water and simmer for fifteen minutes. This, too, will be for about ten pounds of

meat. I do not know how big your pig will be, so mix your sauce to suit the occasion. This must be mopped on frequently, both to season and to keep the meat from drying out too much on the surface.

UNDRESSING the caribou, to dress the hunter.

I have read several articles recently about the caribou and more particularly caribou hide. I am wondering if you know of any source of supply of caribou hides, or perhaps jackets made from same? Seems to me, from what I've read, a jacket of this material would be ideal for outdoors wear.

Ralph C. Lowe
Washington, Pa.

Reply by A. H. Carhart: Your letter to *Adventure* asking about caribou hide as a material for an outdoor jacket, came during the hunting season and I apologize for the delay in answering.

The appeal of the different sort of thing always influences one in what they might want to have as their property. The idea of having a caribou hide garment does have that sort of allure.

But if I tell you the blunt truth—

Fact is, the caribou hide is rather on the thin side. The animals have hair for protection, but the hide itself is not heavy. If you want a jacket for wear, elk, a much heavier leather, will give you better service and be just as attractive. You can inquire of the game and fish departments at Helena, Montana, Cheyenne, Wyoming or Denver, Colorado, as to where you can get legitimate elk hides through licensed dealers.

The fact also is that just as good a jacket material as any is the hide of a young cow—the domestic cow. This leather works up very well in a heavier jacket. It may not have the glamor of caribou skin but it has the wearing qualities.

If you want to follow up the caribou hide deal, write the Reindeer Company, Nome, Alaska. Lomen Bros. formerly operated this outfit, but I'm not sure they still are allied with it, but a letter so addressed, to the Reindeer Company, would get to the most likely supply of caribou skins.

RUNNING water and tall timber—more on Reader Don Lee's projected Far North canoe journey. (See July '52 issue.)

Our party is leaving on an extensive canoe trip from Chicago to Alaska, a distance of approximately 4500 miles. Canoes will be the only method of travel for the entire trip.

We are going north from Chicago, entering Canada on the Red River in Manitoba. We shall then head west through Saskatchewan and hit Alberta briefly in the upper northeastern corner. From there its a northwestern route through the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. We have most of the trip well planned and all supply lists and equipment are ready. We are all set except for the very important data on the country.

It seems no matter where we try, we can not get the proper maps that we need. I have tried all sources I know of but no maps are satisfactory. I am just wondering if maybe some of the Hudson Bay posts in the areas that we are going into would have the maps that we are looking for. The Canadian government says they no longer print some of them, because there is no demand. They advised me to try some of the mapping services and I did—with no luck.

The only place I have found maps that I could use is in the map room of the Chicago Public Library, but these I can only look at. It was from these maps that I planned the trip. I am hoping that possibly you could give me some lead on where to obtain the maps I am looking for.

In addition I would like some information on the situation in the Northwestern Territories. I have talked to some men who have been up there, but not recently. I was wondering if, because of the enlarged mining and excavating up there, especially around the Slave Lake area, any parts would be hard to get through.

Also since time is a vital factor, I would like to know the latest possible time we would be able to travel—that is, when would the ice, cold, etc. make it impossible to go any farther by canoe.

Lastly I would like to know if we have to get permission to travel through some of that country from any source other than the Canadian government. What happens if we have to pass through some Indian reservations, Hudson Bay Company property, or even some private land? I am hoping you can help us out on these points.

Don Lee,
Des Plains, Ill.

Reply by Phillip H. Godsell: I will endeavour to give you what information I can. I have made the trip myself from Lake Winnipeg to the mouth of the Mackenzie, completing the latter part across the Rocky Mountains from Aklavic to Fort Yukon and Fairbanks by dog team. According to your letter you propose to hit Alberta in the "upper northwestern corner," by which I presume you mean at Stony Rapids near Fond du Lac on the eastern end of Lake Athabasca. From there on it should be plain sailing, provided you have the proper equipment and canoes.

You will have to paddle down the Slave River a hundred miles to Fort Fitzgerald. Between there and Fort Smith, N.W.T. are

the only obstructions to navigation—and this applies to canoes as well as river boats —The Rapids of the Drowned, Mountain Rapids and a string of bad water extending the entire distance to Fort Smith. These are dangerous and I have known quite a number of men including two priests who did not get ashore at Fort Fitzgerald (Formerly Smith Landing) fast enough and were sucked into the swift water to their destruction.

However there is now a good road between Fort Fitzgerald and Fort Smith with motor transport available to move your canoes and equipment across. Launching your craft beneath the high bank at Fort Smith you will continue down the Slave River one hundred and eighty miles to Great Slave Lake. Coasting the southern shore from point to point you will reach Hay River, now quite a northern town, and continue on along the s.w. shore to Wrigley Harbour and after following a series of shallow lakes you will find yourselves in the Mackenzie River, some 75 miles from Fort Providence, where there is a Hudson's Bay post and a Roman Catholic Mission.

You will then pass (about 180 miles apart) Fort Simpson, quite an important post at the junction of the Liard and Mackenzie, then Fort Wrigley, Fort Norman and continue on down running the Parle Pas Rapids, which don't amount to much and can be easily navigated until you run into the swift water of the Ramparts, where the entire river is squeezed between castellated rock walls for about ten miles, where it debouches within three miles of Fort Good Hope.

From there you would find no obstructions to Arctic Red River. Close to here the narrow and rapid stream known as the Rat River meets the Peel River and you would have to follow this stream inland to the Height of Land and portage over to La Pierre House where you would be on the headwaters of the Porcupine River, which you would follow down until it joins the Yukon.

At Arctic Red River you could probably get some of the Indians to give you what information you need about the trip up the Rat River. It's a tough trip, as it would mean wading much of the way and hauling the canoe along by brute force against swift water spilling over a rocky bed. The distance is between 75 miles and 100 miles and would constitute the toughest part of the trip. The mosquitoes would also be bad.

Regarding maps, why don't you write the Topographical Survey, Department of the Interior, Government of Canada, Ottawa, Ont., outlining the routes you are going to follow and asking them for the sheets covering these routes; that's where I used to get them from when I was covering these regions as Inspecting Officer for the Hudson's Bay Company and also for my books. Don't depend on finding maps at the Hudson's Bay Company Posts en route; some of them have wall maps of the adjacent region, but that's about all. You may find maps at the Northwest Territories Administration Office at Fort Smith, N.W.T., you should drop in there and see them anyway. Try to get a map of the region between the Mackenzie River and La-Pierrel House, covering your route by the Rat River.

Regarding the general situation in the Northwest Territories. There are no closed areas since the Hudson's Bay Company surrendered their chartered rights to Ruperts Land to the Dominion government shortly after Confederation, back in 1870, and you will find nothing to obstruct your free movements from the time you start out until you reach Alaska. As for the best time to go North—the Athabasca River and Slave River are usually open and fairly free of ice by May 15th. The only trouble is the great mass of lake ice that continues in Great Slave Lake for a month after navigation is free on the lower rivers mentioned. In the old days the river steamers didn't leave Fort Smith for the arctic until July 1st, though this wait has been reduced since. However you can often get through ice channels by canoe long before the larger river vessels can get through. I would say that if you hit Great Slave Lake by June 10th you wouldn't likely be held up too long, and if lucky might get right through. Once across Great Slave Lake it would be plain sailing as both the Liard and the Mackenzie break up around the 15th of May and the ice doesn't usually run very long. I have followed the ice down in a small Indian-manned canoe on occasions, going ashore when it dammed up and continuing after the dam broke.

As long as you have made the few arrangements necessary with the Canadian Emigration authorities you will need no more authority as there will be no restricted areas that you would have to pass through. I traveled by canoe from Lake Winnipeg (Grand Rapids) right through to the mouth of the Mackenzie, following the Saskatchewan as far as The Pas, then swinging over to the Churchill River and following it past Isle a la Crosse and Portage La Loche, crossing the old Methy Portage from there to the Clearwater and coasting on down past Fort McMurray and Fort McKay to Fort Chipewyan, thence following the route you contemplate.

Incidentally the Selkirk Navigation Company runs a steamer, *The Kenora*, from Winnipeg to Norway House, stopping at Grand Rapids at the mouth of the Saskatchewan leaving Winnipeg every Monday around noon. You might find this convenient and much faster than paddling across Lake Winnipeg. Three miles above Selkirk you will pass the "Stone Fort" or Lower Fort Garry, the last stone-walled fort in a state of perfect preservation and well worth seeing as the birthplace of the Northwest Mounted Police. I was the last Hudson's Bay officer in charge of that historic fort.

WHERE vacations and rainbows meet—there might be a pot o' gold.

My wife, son, and myself have decided to spend a month's (July or August) vacation prospecting for gold. Would you please tell us where we could go within a radius of fifteen hundred miles from Chicago where we could do a little prospecting? I have read *Handbook for Prospectors* by Von Bernewitz. I've always been extremely interested in hunting for gold. Thank you.

Charles B. Heiler,
Des Plaines, Ill.

Reply by Victor Shaw: Your radius of 1,500 miles sure covers a lot of ground in the U.S.A. and Canada, also. However, if you're after gold only, you can cut out *all* of the Eastern States, and likewise the portion of the south-central Canadian areas included in your radius, as stated. You have little chance in our states east of the Mississippi, and the part of Canada included has been too much prospected and staked to make it at all worth while to venture north of the U.S.-Canadian boundary. Too, in Canada there are wholly different mining laws to be observed, including even the staking of mining claims and of working them.

Now, in the U.S. your radius covers Texas, all of New Mexico, most of Arizona, Utah, all of Colorado and Wyoming, and of Montana only the easternmost portion, which, has little or no favorable geology for lode-or-placer concentrations of gold. Coupled with this the gold placers of Uncle Sam have been worked pretty exhaustively in this area. In fact, even in California most of the placer gold now mined comes from big-scale dredging and hydraulic mining of deep and low-grade deposits, which requires considerable equipment.

However, you do still have some chance of finding a quartz-gold vein with enough yellow metal to make it worth developing. Your best bets are Idaho, northeastern and southwestern Oregon, northern Calif., parts of Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico and Colorado. Only the last three states are within your stated radius, with only eastern Montana inside it, but having little to offer.

Ores of gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, etc. were originally brought up by volcanic action in a molten "magma", which formed all of our great mountain ranges like the Rockies, Cascades, etc. And a rock formation that is most favorable is one where such mountains intruded (thrust up) in areas of sedimentary rocks like slate, schist, shale, etc. which are water-laid rocks and not of volcanic origin.

This is a rough idea, but shows you that you cannot expect to find any gold whatever, except in such regions. It's true even in the Appalachian Range of eastern states, especially it's southern end in the Carolinas, and Georgia, but not farther north; because up there the favorable rock formations were covered deep with glacial debris in our great Ice Age, flowing south and east over the northeastern states.

The same is true in Canada inside your mentioned radius. So, you'll be restricted to less favorable areas, among which Arizona offers your best chances, although it has been prospected to death for gold placers, and to a great extent also for quartz-gold lodes in most all its mountains in the desert or other regions. However, I do know of one range that still, to this writing, remains fairly virgin.

I refer to the Mazatzal Range in southeastern Maricopa County running north-south between the Verde and Tonto rivers, with its south end at Four Peaks Mountain, just north of Salt River. I've been there and jeeped all around it, and know its rock formation is very favorable; also that some gold colors have been found in creeks on its west flank. In fact, I'd have been there this winter if my partner hadn't been taken ill.

Most recent road maps show this range and roads around it, including the Bush Highway, starting 16-17 miles east of Mesa on U.S.-80 from Phoenix, and going north up along the west side of it, but at least five miles from the mountain base. The whole country is wild and primitive, chiefly given over to grazing areas for cattle and horses, and with very few ranches. Those that existed were most all bought up by big stockmen who now run cattle and horses there.

To get to this mountain range that has peaks of 5,000 to 7,000, you should have a jeep, or a 4-drive Dodge truck and go on Bush Highway up on the higher plateau some 15-20 miles north of Salt River crossing. You'd have to take a dirt side road toward Four Peaks Mountain, or farther north about Sunflower Cafe and camp as close as possible, then hike to and up the mountain. Or you could go farther north along this 50-mile range, to a low pass going on through on Tonto River. But keep on the *western* side.

I've had reports last year that on the north side of the Pass on Pine Mountain two very rich gold-bearing veins were found. All the country around is very rough and brushy, with heavy timber on the flanks but bare rock on all higher peaks.

Winter is the best season to prospect, as summer is too hot. Also rattlers are all over lower flanks and the whole plateau region —too, there's little or no water.

One good item about prospecting this range is that there are lots of mountain lion throughout, that stay high in cliffs but prey on cattle below. There's a bounty of $125 a lion, so with a rifle you can probably pay all expenses, maybe more, by hunting these tawny brutes. If you tackle this area you should have anyway $550-$600 for a two month period. Can get outfit for prospecting in Mesa or Phoenix.

FREE before the wind—canoe sailing.

I am a retired Merchant Marine captain. I know how to handle a canoe with a paddle. I do not know how to rig a canoe with *one* sail, so as carry a bit of weather helm. I bought a 16-foot used canoe which has a step for a mast only three feet from the bow. To me it seems as though the mast is a bit too far forward. Should I move it aft in order to obtain balance in the sail? What should the size of the sail be? I want to be able to sail up the wind and tack back and forth. Weather helm will be needed for that.

What would be good dimensions of a triangular sail (Marconi)? I will appreciate anything you can tell me.

I suppose I could have a loose footed jib too, if advisable.

D. D. Collins,
Edwardsville, Kansas

Reply by H. S. M. Kemp: Yes, it is standard practice for canoe manufacturers to set their mast-steps well forward. The Chestnut canoe carries this, as you say, about three feet back from the bow—so does the Peterborough on some of its freight models. But on other Peterborough models, and on the old-time freight models, the hole for the mast was set in the short forward deck, with the step immediately below it. And as these decks are only about a foot long, that set the mast definitely right up in the bow. A mast set squarely amidships of a canoe would make it more capricious even than it is, and I wouldn't recommend your trying it.

I am enclosing a rough sketch of how your sail should be rigged. You'll see that it is of the lateen type. It's long years since I used one of these in the North, and then it was back in the days before Ole Evinrude had given us his outboard. And the way I always heard it was, that for-size, your sail should "measure" half the length of your canoe. If your canoe is a sixteen-footer, then your sail should measure eight feet along the lower boom and eight feet high. Your sail being a diagonal, or half a square, that should give you half of eight feet by eight feet, or thirty-two square feet—which I figure should be about right. The sail may be tied to the peak of the mast or run up on a pulley. It's immaterial, so long as the full sail is free to swing in the wind and you *don't* tie your main line. The mast-clip I've shown will give you this free-swinging action of the sail—handy in tacking or if you have to come about in the wind.

With a sail and rig of this type in the North, you were necessarily burdened with it on every portage. That's why it was never too popular. We preferred a square-sail fashioned out of a blanket or a canvas tarp. Any two old poles would serve as mast and boom, and you could chuck 'em away before starting a portage, then slap down two new ones at the other end. And the rough-and-ready square sail would give you just about as much speed as the fancier lateen type.

I've never heard of a jib on a canoe. I don't think it would be too safe. Sailing a canoe, you have to be ready to pay out the main line if a bit too much wind gets up. You couldn't pay out a jib; in fact, once afloat, you couldn't get at it.

I've shown sideboards in my sketch. These take the place of a centerboard—something that wouldn't be very practical in a canoe. These sideboards hang down in the water, one on each side of the canoe. I've never used them, being more gear to haul around, but they're supposed to be quite good. Staying at one place, fooling around on one lake or river, you might like them. Certainly they'd stop a lot of drift if you were sailing close to the wind. These can be bought, but they should be nothing difficult to make. The two wings are hinged to the cross-piece, so that one can move independently of the other. The cross-piece is clamped across the canoe, amidships.

As I've hinted, my canoeing in the North was strictly utilitarian. In the pre-kicker days, we sailed every chance we got. And though sailing was only a means of getting from one place to another, I always got a tremendous kick out of it. Of course, you have to give a canoe the respect that's due it. That means, don't expect it to carry the sail of a York-boat. A canoe is extremely light and, therefore, can be extremely cranky. So don't be afraid of a good big rock for ballast, kneel down rather than sit, and *never* tie the main line. But why am I telling you all this? Men who retire from the Merchant Marine generally know what it's all about!

So good luck to you. And if I can be of any assistance to you at all, just drop me another line.

STARTING a commercial fishing venture.

Will you please give me some information on commercial fishing? I have a thirty-eight foot auxiliary sloop. Would like to fish off the east or west coast of Florida. What would be a good location? What kind of fishing would be best and easiest for a beginner? What equipment?

I'll thank you for any information you may be able to give me.

Sincerely yours,
William Brock
Perth Amboy, N. J.

Reply by C. Blackburn Miller: When you allude to commercial fishing and taking your type of craft into consideration, I conclude that you intend to fish for market rather than to cater to sportsmen in the Gulf Stream off the east coast of Florida.

I do not recommend the east coast for the

commercial fishing that you want. The Gulf Stream is too spotty and uncertain. Furthermore, sailfish are not marketable and whereas dolphin is a choice dish, you would not get the financial returns that would make your venture worth while.

The reefs of the east coast are pretty well fished out until you get down in the vicinity of Key West—where the native captains look with a cold and fishy eye on any newcomer.

There remains the west coast and the gulf. In these waters there are fish but for the groupers, red snappers and the rest of the snapper family and jewfish, you will have to fish deep, which requires strong lines and a considerable amount of lead. Kingfish and Spanish mackerel can be taken trolling with light tackle; a six or eight ounce tip and #12 threadline is all that is necessary.

There are numerous ports from which you can fish, from Naples north to St. Petersburg, and if you fail to have success fishing out of one of these, it's easy to press on to the next one.

It would be advisable to see the catches which the local men are taking and arrange your plans accordingly.

SOURDOUGH recipe and Far North camping needs.

I would greatly appreciate any information you can give me relative to the making or the actual recipe for sourdough—the type that is or was used in the Far North. Also I would like to know if there is a good cookbook out on the subject of outdoor cookery, a book that would deal with the canning and preserving of wild game as well as its preparation for eating.

I intend to try camping in the Sierra Nevadas for a period of approximately three months. I want to try my hand at trapping. Can you give me any idea of the minimum essentials I would need in the way of camping equipment for a trip of this type. I do not intend to have a cabin but some type of lean-to. The region I intend to go to would be roughly from Mt. Shasta south to Mt. Lassen. A couple of questions I had that might not be quite in your field but I'll ask them anyway. Is there much fur trapping in that part of the country and are there restrictions on trapping in the national forests?

Lee D. Ommerman,
Travis AFB, Cal.

Reply by Paul M. Fink: The principle employed in making sourdough bread is simply that of using the fermentation bacteria present everywhere, the same bacteria that are the base of commercial yeast. Wherever the temperature is above freezing sourdough can be made, though naturally it "comes" faster with a little heat.

Mix together four cups flour, two teaspoons salt and three tablespoons sugar with enough warm water to make a thick batter. Put in a warm place—behind the stove, in the sun, etc.—to ferment. In about forty-eight hours it will be "working," will smell to high heaven and be ready for use.

Stir into the "sourings" one tablespoon melted fat and one cup flour mixed with one teaspoon baking soda, then add enough extra flour to make a smooth dough. Shape into small loaves, cover with a cloth and set in a warm place to rise. In about an hour or so it should double in size and be ready to bake. This, in oven or reflector, should take from forty-five minutes to an hour.

If you want to keep the sourings going, keep out a cupful and add ingredients as originally. This should sour over night, and the process can be kept going indefinitely.

About the best thing in the way of outdoor cookbooks would be Arthur Carhart's *Outdoorsman's Cook Book* ($2.49) or Horace Kephart's *Camping and Woodcraft* ($3.95). Either can be obtained from the MacMillan Co., 60 Fifth Ave., New York, or your local book-seller can get them for you. Carhart's book is devoted entirely to the subject, while Kephart's is a veritable encyclopedia and if you are not well versed in woodcraft, will be worth the price.

I'm rather skeptical of the feasibility of living out three months in a lean-to in the trapping season. Can be done, yes, but when a spell of cold weather sets in, keeping warm will be a problem of major nature. Any overnight bivouac can be made comfortable, but that's a different thing from living under unfavorable conditions for a considerable length of time.

Not knowing the size of your party, method of transportation, distance from base of supplies, etc., makes it difficult to give anything like a fitting supply list. The following are some recommendations. Food supplies and clothing have not been included, as too many unknown factors are concerned.

Axe, full size
Files and whetstone.
Small shovel or entrenching tool
5 lbs. assorted nails
Small roll each, copper and iron wire.
Large ball heavy twine
Small coil ¼ inch rope.
Canvas water bucket and wash basin.
First aid and medicine kit.
Sewing and repair kit.
Personal kit—shaving gear, soap, tooth paste, etc.
Sleeping bag—down, heavy.
Waterproof ground cloth.
Air mattress or heavy pad.
Cook kit.
Reflecting baker.
Dish pan.
Dish and hand towels.
Sheath knife and heavy pocket knife.
Compass and maps
Arms (check local laws)
Fishing gear.

AN INTRODUCTION for a smoke-chaser.

Recently, I was told that the U. S. Forestry Service hired men during the summer to help control and fight forest fires, especially in Alaska. Is this true? If it is true, would you please tell me how and where I can apply as I want to obtain some summer job that will help to pay for my college education.

Are there any private lumbering companies that hire men for the summer season only? If there are any, please send me their addresses so that I may write to them.

Richard Horne

Reply by A. H. Carhart: Under separate cover I am sending you *Careers in Forestry*, which is the best information you can get and more complete than I could give in a letter.

For summer work write the Chief of Personnel Management, in any of the regional offices listed in the booklet, give your background, and get your name on the list for the summer work.

As for lumber companies, you might mention that if no jobs are available in the Forest Service, you'd like to get in touch with lumber outfits that might be hiring men at that time. I don't know of a better avenue to find this out.

Good luck to you.

BIRDS of below-the-Border feather.

I am interested in buying several pairs of South American native birds for an aviary. Can you tell me how and where I can purchase these birds—finches, weavers, wax bills, and such.

I have several African and Australian birds, but can get no information about South American birds which, I am told, are the most beautiful and desirable of all.

Wm. Wickham,
Cleveland, Ohio

Reply by Arthur J. Burks: I am very much interested in your quest, though not sure I can steer you rightly. From the *jaburu-moleque*, a kind of stork, to the *beija flor*, "kiss flower bird", or hummingbird, you'll find your way through a vast variety of birds, some of them ugly, some exquisite. The *urubu-rei* (royal vulture) and the *urubu-commun* (common vulture) both black, the former having scarlet wattles and topknot, to the Urubu with the yellow face, the *urubu-gereba*, also the *urubu-tinga*, or little vulture, the *caracaras*, *gavioes* (hawks), are found in the jungles, as are many of the birds you mention, the *bicudo*, the *carachue*—also known as the *sabia* and regarded by Brazilians as the most exquisite singers; the *uira-puru* (pachysylvia rubifrons), the *tem-tem curicaca*—most of these names are Indian attempts to give the birds names sounding like their song, or somehow connected with their natural coloring—the *patativa*, best singer on the Amazon; the *japiim*, a warbler, I believe, (I'm no birdman), which builds its nests only near human habitations; the *grahuna* and *irauna*; the *anambes*, the *arirambas*, the *pipira de papo vermelho*. It's quite a list and I won't try to give it here.

You could write to the Brazilian Trade Mission, 551 Fifth Avenue, New York City, for information on how to get these birds, but short of going after them and managing somehow to get them into the States, I don't know. You might also write to the Director, Museo Goehlde, Belem, Para, Brazil (10c airmail, if you're in a hurry, which no Brazilian will be, I warn you!)

I might help you with names, later, if you make useful contact as I've suggested above. I know people who are constantly in the Brazilian jungles, who might ship birds to you—but the cost would be plenty. It's barely possible that, if you wanted enough birds, and didn't mind price, the Mundurucu Indians would collect them for you. If you care to try this, write to Frei Ricardo Havertz Superior, *Missão Franciscano Cururu*, c/o Frei Domingos Herman, Santarem, Para, Brazil, and allow three months for message to reach the Cururu mission after Herman receives and forwards it up the Tapajos. Anyway, good luck, and let me know how you make out.

PERU—for living and shooting.

We are planning to move to Lima, Peru, South America, in the near future and would like to know what we will be allowed to take with us, painting equipment, sporting guns, etc. Also, how much money are we required to have? What are living expenses there compared to the United States?

We have tried, unsuccessfully, to find the addresses of Peruvian, Chilean, and Panamanian passenger freighter lines that come to the West Coast. Could you help us in this?

C. E. Ashton,
New Pine Creek, Oregon

Reply by Edgar Young: The Department of Commerce, Latin American Division, Washington, D. C., publishes a pamphlet that gives a free list of all southern republics—including Peru—which I unfortunately do not have at hand to refer to. In general, all personal equipment and belongings are allowed free entry through the

customs, as is also the case with farming implements, trade tools, et cetera. The port of entry for Lima is Callao from which Lima is reached by bus, street car, taxi, and Peru Central RR.

I think you will have trouble with your guns. I had to leave mine in custody of the customs people for a week or so, until I found an American living there who knew a man who knew a man, and he came personally to help me lift them. All these Latin countries are revolution-conscious to the extreme and they are not only skeptical about weapons themselves but also of any amount of extra ammunition. I had twenty-five pounds of cartridges in a shot-poke, which duly impressed them that I had ulterior motives in mind. I had bought these in Brazil, where I fortunately found some thirty-eight specials which had been hard to get elsewhere—so I had loaded up.

There is little to hunt in the vicinity of Lima unless you count sea-lions, and after killing a few while they sat on the rocks up around the point north of Callao, I got ashamed of myself, and used the rest of my ammunition shooting at bottles and targets. Even up in the highlands and clear on across to Cerro de Pasco, there is nothing in the line of game, although on down below Cerro on the upper Yucayali there are deer, monkeys, and an occasional puma or jaguar. If you must have guns it is perhaps better to not take them from here but to buy French, Belgian, or German weapons locally. As a rule these are dirt cheap and not at all bad. Otherwise leave the guns in bond and look around for a local American, Canadian, or Englishman, to help get them out.

It has been some years since I was traveling by steamer on the Pacific side. Years ago I made the trip from Seattle to Port Los Angeles (San Pedro) on a wind-jammer equipped with an auxiliary engine; and I've made trips from San Francisco in all directions several times as passenger and crew member, including one trip on a German tramp during which I had to fight every man-jack on board with my fists and whatever I could lay hands on.

As I remember it, the Peruvian and Chilean national lines use the Panama Canal and come on up to our eastern ports; but I think the Panama Railroad steamers not only run between New York and New Orleans to the Zone and on beyond to Guayaquil, but they also have, or did have, ships plying between Balboa and San Francisco regularly; and a letter addressed to Ticket Agent, Panama RR Steamship Company, New Orleans, La., will elicit the information about the San Francisco connection. The New Orleans agent can also give the exact price, not only from San Francisco to Guayaquil but on to Callao, for steamers sell tickets the same way that railroads do, and will collect for through passage that requires trans-shipping enroute.

As a matter of fact, steamer fares have always been much higher on the Pacific side than over here on the east coast, for some reason unbeknown to me; and it's barely possible that it would pay you to go to New Orleans by train, bus, or auto. I am quite sure either the Peruvian Line or the Chilean Line, or both, may be taken from this gulf port. In this way you would not have to transfer at Panama or Guayaquil with whatever annoyance and delay this would cause.

I have not seen the English line, Royal Mail, mentioned for some time and really do not know if it is still in existence; but years ago it was a top passenger and freight line, mainly plying the Atlantic; but they had a subsidiary that operated out of San Fran called The Pacific Steam Navigation Company and which Englishmen called "the home boats." These ships not only made all Pacific coast ports clear to the Straits of Magellan but they went on up to Buenos Aires and Rio and thence to England. If this line is still in operation you could book direct passage to Callao on large, modern ships.

If you arrive in Peru first class on a steamer, this will serve as an earnest that you are not a pauper and are not likely to become one while in the country; but if you arrive second- or third-class you may be asked to show the equivalent of five hundred dollars. Mainly, though, this precaution applies to deck or steerage passengers.

Living expenses in Lima depend on how you are going to live. If you rent an apartment, with garage and all the gadgets, it can cost you as much as here; but if you rent a house out in the suburbs and learn to like native food, based on garbanza stews, dried beans, and fresh fruit and vegetables; you can live for a fraction of what it costs you here at home.

They do a lot of building in Lima with stone, brick, and even adobe; and most of the houses are covered with tiles; but you could figure on catching on as either a painter "over the hill" at Cerro de Pasco with the mines or smelter or railroad, or as a machinist or mechanic in Lima or Callao. I worked a while at Cerro and while the altitude is extreme, I managed to like it and make money. The boys working up there are tops and the pay is good.

MAKING a hunting bow:

I would like to make a yew hunting bow, the wood or small tree is 6 feet long, 4 inches thick at one end by 3 inches thick at the other.

There are few knots, and the wood is fairly straight. I have had it for 15 years, kept dry, indoors. Do you think it is too dry? If not, how should I go about making it.

I have made a great many lemonwood

bows—in fact, used to be instructor to scout leaders for bow and arrow making, but, have not made a bow for about 15 years, so I need re-instruction, especially in how to handle yew in the log.

I also intend to hunt deer, so I suppose I would need the heavier dowels, rather than the lighter target weight dowels.

Where may I buy hunting tips?

I shall appreciate any information you may give.

W. Henry Austin,
Santa Paula, Cal.

Reply by Earl B. Powell: Fifteen years is a long time for seasoning, but if the wood has been in a cool, dry place, away from a lot of light, it might do. The main objection of course would be the size of the stick, as it is pretty small to make a bow out of at best.

You must remember that at the small end it will be but 1½" in diameter in a half round with a streak of useless wood in the center.

You will also have to disregard the regular flat or semi-flat regular construction and make the thing oval in cross section provided that after ripping it down the center (too small to risk splitting it) and it may shoot. I once made a good bow out of a sapling but had to make it differently from what I usually made a bow on account of the shape.

As you live about an hour's drive from me, I would be glad to help you rip it out in the rough.

You can get hunting points and other supplies locally. I suggest that you try J. D. Easton, 1805 5th Ave. Los Angeles, who has the best equipped Archery shop west of the Mississippi, or Henry Bitzenberger, 800 E. 4th, Los Angeles.

PREHISTORIC fossil?

I don't know if the information I want comes under your classification or not, but it seemed closer than any other listed in the *Adventure Magazine*.

Recently, while working on a dam near Republican City, Nebraska, the crew I was pushing dug up the skeleton of a fish. This skeleton was 6'6" long. The head was badly broken up by the jackhammer hits but as it was lying in a seam of the shaly chalk we were able to uncover and photograph the fossil. Also in the same seam but about 10' away from the skeleton we found several teeth similar to the tooth of a shark. These were shaped like arrow heads and had serrated edges. They were sharp enough to cut flesh as one of my men found out. He cut quite a gash in his finger testing the edge. I didn't get to keep any of the teeth as the superintendent and big shots on the job wanted them for souveniers—however I did keep a section of backbone from the fish.

What I would like to know is, is there any way of telling what fish this was, the time it was on earth, and some other data on it? The skeleton was dug up at about 1800-1850 feet above sea level, about forty feet below ground surface. We also dug up a string of backbone about 15' long. The largest bones were about the size of a man's fist and seemed to be getting larger. We couldn't excavate fully.

I will be glad to send the segment of backbone and the picture to you for study if it is of any interest to you.

G. T. Watts,
Walden, Colorado

Reply by Clifford H. Pope: The big fish that you describe is probably *Portheus* or *Ichthyodectes* of the family Chirocentridae. Unfortunately these fossil animals have no familiar popular names.

The teeth with the sharp, serrated edges were sharks teeth. The string of vertebrae 15 feet long probably belonged to a mosasaur, a plediosaur, or a dinosaur. All of these are reptiles.

You were in upper Cretaceous rocks, probably the Niobrara chalk. The fossils are approximately 100,000,000 years old.

NEW MEXICO for health.

My son, age three and a half, has asthma, and usually gets it through the damp, rainy season. Many doctors here told us to go to Arizona or New Mexico. Do you know of any Army camps there, and are they situated near towns?

I've never been out West. My wife and son plan on going to Albuquerque in September until I return in October and meet them there. I would like to settle down there.

I'm a stevedore, but worked in copper smelters for a while. Can you tell me about the rent and housing situation there? Are state and federal civil jobs very hard to get? Hope you can give me some idea of what to expect.

Sgt. Frank J. Brzostowski
North Korea.

Reply by H. F. Robinson: On receipt of your letter I visited our Chamber of Commerce and they made you quite a selection of printed and other matter concerning Albuquerque and this part of New Mexico. You should probably receive it as soon as you do this.

New Mexico is mostly dry and the climate is supposed to be good for those suffering from asthma. Usually we do not have real hot weather here, as Albuquerque is 5000 feet above sea level, nor very cold weather. The average annual rainfall being about 8¼ inches.

There are several places where soldiers

(Continued on page 108)

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Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Yale University, Institute of Human Relations, 333 Cedar Street, New Haven 11, Connecticut.

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(Continued from page 105)

are stationed, but I cannot give you details. You might be able to get this information through your C. O.

Can't say much about state and federal openings, but this is headquarters for many Federal Bureaus and there should be a chance. Also a large Federal Employment Office.

Rents are rather high, but I believe you would have little or no trouble in finding suitable quarters.

This is great country — and I should know, having been down here for over 60 years.

SOUTHWEST woodsman wants to become a Northwest woodsman.

Upon my discharge from the service, I'd like to buy a ranch in Canada. However, I would like to find a spot where I could devote about half of my time to ranching and the other half to hunting and trapping. I realize that land which is ideal for game is usually not overly good for agronomy, and good grazing land is usually not abundant in game. Here in the States, land where the two can be combined practically is almost nonexistent.

If you could give me the names of some posts or towns, near which these conditions prevail, I would certainly appreciate it. I would also like to know if a U.S. citizen can purchase land in Canada and live there without becoming a citizen. Would such land as you might suggest be trapped already, or would it be more or less virgin?

I notice that you are also the expert on the R.C.M.P. and I wonder if you could tell me the length of the enlistment period —and, again, if a U. S. citizen can become a member. Can one obtain duty in the back provinces. I have spent my outdoors life in the Southwest, and thought perhaps a tour of duty with the R.C.M.P. would aid in making the transition from Southwestern woodsman to Northern woodsman.

Cpt. Stan Barnhill
Syracuse, N. Y.

Reply by H. S. M. Kemp: I have no very good news for you insofar as trapping goes in Saskatchewan. Land may be bought, but homesteads have all disappeared. Moreover, trapping grounds are now laid out in "blocks," wherein the operations are conducted by a trapper's council. To get into one of these blocks, the council would have to approve the move, which would depend on the ability of the particular territory to support any more trappers. In all, the move was made by the Saskatchewan government to safeguard both the fur and the rights of the trappers (Indian and white) already there.

Of course, this only applies to Sas-

katchewan. The other provinces have laws and regulations which are not so stringent. While I am not familiar with all, you could obtain full information by writing to the Department of Natural Resources of the various provinces (which are all located in the provincial capitals) and ask for direct information. Ontario, Manitoba or British Columbia should be good bets; the capitals of these are, respectively, Toronto, Winnipeg and Victoria.

Regarding enlistment in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the attached typewritten sheet sets out the requirements.

CAPTAIN Cook's last tour.

I have volume 2 of a two-volume set, *A Narrative of the Voyage Round the World Performed by Captain James Cook with an Account of his Life,* by A. Kippis, D.D.F.R.S. and S.A. This book was published in Cooperstown, N.Y., by H. & E. Phinney in 1841.

This book is in fair condition, leather bound, about 6" x 3¾" and has 209 pages.

With only one of the two volume set, does this book have any value?

Francis H. King,
Pontiac, Mich.

Reply by Kenneth A. Fowler: It would seem to me that the book would have rarity value if you possessed the companion Vol. 1, which you state you do not have. However, if you were lucky enough to find a collector owning Vol. 1, but lacking the copy you possess, you would be in the happy position of being able to fullfill a collector's need, and probably could effect a sale.

A chat with a reliable local second-hand book dealer might be fruitful to you in this respect. This kind of dealer frequently receives requests for rare and out-of-print items of bibliophilic interest, and, if he deemed your orphan volume of sufficient worth, possibly would be glad to advertise it for sale in one of the book trade publications on a commission basis.

Incidentally, you state that your volume is only in "fair" condition, and for your information I might add that condition is always a factor in the price a book brings, provided it has rarity to begin with. In almost any bookseller's catalogue the condition of a book is always candidly stated, and the finer the condition, the higher the price asked.

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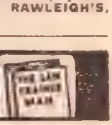

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Dept. G, Hagerstown, Maryland

(Continued from page 77)

beside him, his breath coming in short, uneven gasps. "Sled's gone," he panted. "No use—we're through."

Carston fought his own private battle with himself while he waited for Binnell's breathing to get under control again. The big man was too close to the breaking point for words to urge him on. It would take something stronger than anything he could say. This time, the doctor would have to draw the will to fight from within himself.

He leaned toward the doctor and brushed the snow from his eyes. He strained to see the expression on Binnell's face, but it was too dark.

He hesitated an instant, then said, "Doc, the dice crapped out on us. I don't know how far the river is from here. Might be a mile, might be five." He thrust the bag toward the doctor. "When you hit the river, turn right and follow it to Elkridge."

Binnel's head raised a little, but he said nothing.

"It's no use trying to carry me," Carston said. "You'd never make it. Besides, it's too late for me, my legs have been frozen for over an hour."

Binnel got up then, slowly, and took the bag, looping his belt through the handle so it would ride on his hip. He stood there a minute before speaking. He didn't look at Carston.

"Where's the river from here?"

"Keep going downhill—you can't miss it," Carston said. He watched the big man standing before him, and tried to make his mind as numb as his legs at this moment. His life had been one gamble after another since he could remember. But he'd never gambled for stakes like this before . . .

Binnell knelt in front of him. "Nice try," he muttered gruffly. Carston could feel his big arms pulling his legs like two sticks of wood around his middle. "Get your arms around my neck," Binnell ordered. He got to his feet unsteadily and started down the mountain with slow, cautious steps.

TEN MINUTES later, they were in the first, thin stand of fir and pine. Carston knew the river lay only a few hundred yards away. The timber grew thicker as

they descended and the wind was less severe, the snow lighter. Near a thick clump of trees, Binnell set him down.

Working without pause, he gathered wood until he had a huge pile. Then he built a windbreak and started a tiny blaze that grew to roaring flames as the tarry pitch in the wood caught. The sudden heat of it made Carston feel faint.

Binnel stripped off Carston's boots and rolled up his pants legs. For thirty minutes he beat and massaged Carston's legs with snow. The pain grew so great that Carston could hardly stand it.

"Doc," he panted, "that's enough."

Binnell's tense face lifted. "You can feel it now?"

"Hurts like hell," Carston said, "like a million needles sticking into me."

Binnell smiled grimly. "Good." He kept working on the legs until they felt so raw and sore that Carston almost screamed aloud from the pain. Finally Binnell put the socks back on and wrapped the feet in his own jacket.

"Keep that fire going," he ordered, and reached for his bag.

"Doc—" Carston paused to clear his throat— "thanks."

He saw the man's bulk disappear in the outer ring of firelight and for a few minutes he could hear the crunching of his boots, heavy in the dry snow, the sound carrying thinly through the still night air. Then at last, all he could hear was the snapping of burning wood, and the hissing of the scattered flakes of snow as they hit the fire.

For several hours he dozed and fed the fire alternately. He was almost asleep when the three men broke through the edge of the timber, dragging the heavy blanket-laden sled.

"How you doing?" one of them asked.

"All right," Carston said, "Did Binnell—"

"Fine," the man said, "He was operating on the boy when we left." He looked at Carston curiously. "The doc sent a message. Said you'd know what he meant. Said to tell you that for his money, you were a good risk."

Carston smiled. "I'll probobly be asleep when you get me to Elkridge," he said, "But you might tell the doc, that—he was the best gamble I ever made."

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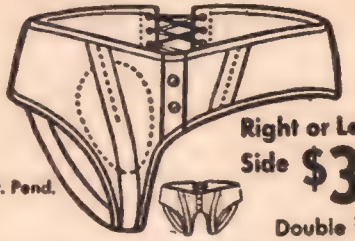

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(Continued from page 10)

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FROM HARRY BECK, Cornwallis, Oregon, the following:

I purchased my first issue of *Adventure* in February, 1912 and have not missed a copy since.

Since that time I have crossed the Pacific Ocean 47 times, the Atlantic 17 times, including five trips around the world.

Si Rich's newsstand, in Portland, Oregon, used to save the magazine for me. I was considerably saddened by the changes in *Adventure* a year or so ago, and glad to see its recovery. I might suggest that a reprint of some of the stories published twenty or more years ago would prove interesting—such as St. Mars, Buckley, Young, etc. I would like to own all of St. Mars' stories to reread.

At present I am raising beef cattle on irrigated pasture, four head to the acre, but am thinking of selling out to go logging in Alaska. Am still a young man at sixty.

Luck, Mr. Beck—and when we're as young as you we'll come a-logging with you.

ADD one from Charles S. Robinson, Pedro Miguel, C. Z. Mr. Robinson's ideas seem eminently worth while and, time and circumstance permitting, we hope to bring some of them off.

I read with considerable interest your March issue and especially the *Camp-fire* in which you invite *Adventure* fans to give their ideas and suggestions.

There must be thousands like the writer who have faithfully followed the many changes for better or for worse for the past 30 years or so.

I am sure that there were few of us who did not apply for an Identification Card or who did not write many times to the A. A. experts for data and advice on projects and places that to most of us were merely deeply cherished daydreams—a desire to break away from the humdrum chains that bound us to Philadelphia, Kansas City or Spodunk.

I for one kept Edgar Young busy answering questions about outfitting and the possibility of making an overland hike from Panama to the platinum fields of Colombia and your good Victor Shaw has on more than one occasion given of his excellent

knowledge on the finer points of prospecting for gold from Nome to Matzatlan. I have since been fortunate in having had an opportunity to visit and to work in many of those faraway and romantic lands that first beckoned from the pages of *Adventure*.

Most of us would welcome a section of the magazine which might be called "Adventure Remembers," in which we once again could thrill to reprints of Harold Lamb's *Khlit, Kirdy of The White Falcon, The Making of The Morning Star* and similar fine tales.

Your readers would no doubt appreciate an "Adventure's Family Album" feature wherein we could meet in print many of your old standby A.A. experts and gentlemen like Messers Edgar Young, Victor Shaw, Raymond S. Spears, Tom Mills and many others of the writer and editorial staff giving us a short biography and sketch of their many countenances. A lot of us would like to know what became of A. S. H. too.

More yarns of the Congo and interior a la *The Gray Charteris*. More tales of medieval men-at-arms in the manner of Sabatini, F. R. Buckley and Bedford-Jones' *Rodomont*. More tales of India in the Empire days of Kipling and Mundy. Too many of us are too much with today's world of jets and atoms.

Well sir, that's about all I can offer for the moment and let me assure you that it is a pleasure to see at *Adventure's* helm once more a skipper interested in piloting the good ship back into her rightful lanes. Good luck and fair sailing!

And that brings us to the point where we must once again break camp. Next time, let's see the same faces, and some new ones. Same place.

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NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

LOST TRAILS—John A. Thompson, mining engineer, and author of "lost" mine stories. Last heard living in a New York hotel, but may be anywhere. Please write to Raymond Dow, 2922—164th St., Flushing 58, N. Y.

I would like to locate a relative of mine.—His name is Edward F. Felden, most of the time called Eddie. When last heard of, in 1929, he was a salesman for the Smith Manufacturing Company of Fort Worth, Texas. His age would be in the middle forties, light brown hair, possibly graying. Write Sgt. Billy W. Fielden, AF 18338776 Hq. & Hq. Sqdn., 2225th Personnel Processing Group, Fort Dix, New Jersey.

I would like to hear from anyone knowing the whereabouts of my father, William Blain Hingley. When last heard of he was in Spokane, Washington. Notify Jim Henderson, Hot Springs, Montana, Box 462.

I would like to reestablish contact with Willis Threlkeld of Oklahoma, last seen at Fort Monmouth in the summer of 1946. George P. Calvert, 1380 Whitman St., Williamsport 21, Pa.

I wish to learn the whereabouts of Miler Edminston or any member of his family—wife, Nina, daughters, Gladys and Shirley, or son, Harry. The last I knew of them, they were in Willisville, Ill. He was a foreman of the construction crew which built the road between Ava and Willisville in '29, I think. Roy Crosby, R. 4 care of E. Beaubien, Caro, Mich.

I would like to locate Charles Lesweka who lives in Chicago, Ill. Thomas M. Fuller, Annex 1 N. 750 South State St., Elgin, Ill.

I would like to contact Marius F. Bos, whose last address was Oriente Province, Cuba. Last heard of him when we parted in Puerto Mexico, Veracruz. Also Bill Brooks. We operated a saloon together in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala. Please contact E. Livingston, 40 High Street, Reno, Nevada.

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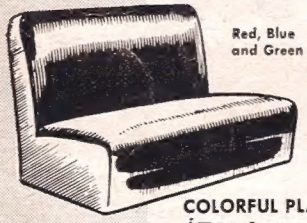

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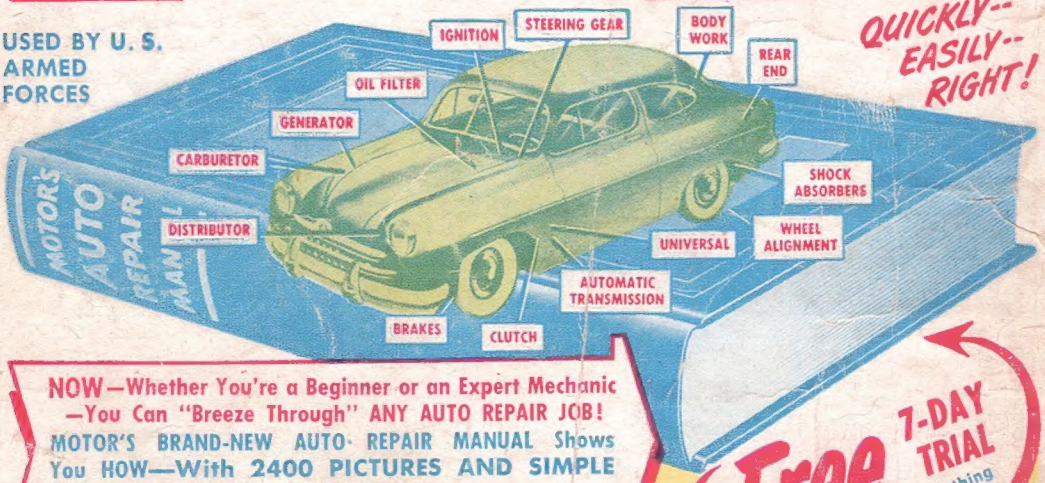

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